

INTRODUCTION

The nation's coastal zone management program was envisioned by Congress in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. States and U.S. territories with marine or Great Lakes shorelines were given the opportunity to develop management plans for coastal resources and unique authority to implement these plans.

This document, the *Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Plan*, describes the Massachusetts vision for its coastal resources and uses, and the steps that the Commonwealth takes to realize that vision. It is a complete overview of the CZM Program and includes CZM's history, its policies and regulatory role, the agency's programs and services, and the inter-relationship of the CZM program and other government environmental agencies.

The information that it contains is of use to a variety of coastal constituents, including federal, state and local government officials and agencies, proponents of projects affecting the Massachusetts coast, and interested members of the public. In addition to descriptive information, the Plan includes addresses and contact numbers of CZM staff who are able to provide interested readers with needed additional program information.

The plan is organized as described below.

To set a context for this plan, information regarding the federal coastal program can be found in *Chapter 1 – The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act*.

The Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program was approved by the federal implementing agency, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, in April, 1978, the first approved program on the east coast and the third in the nation. *Chapter 2 – The Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program* further discusses the structure of the Massachusetts program. CZM's geographic jurisdiction is described in *Chapter 3 – The Massachusetts Coastal Zone Boundary*.

The core of a state's coastal jurisdiction is found in its program policies. These policies integrate the provisions of the many state environmental statutes and regulations into clear statements of CZM's coastal management goals. The policies inform CZM's program development and are the key element of its regulatory authority. Massachusetts' original program policies were published in 1978. In 1997, the policies were revised and updated. *Chapter 4 – CZM Program Policies* provides a complete discussion of Massachusetts coastal policies and the authorities for their implementation.

States with an approved program plan have unique authority to require that any federal action (including direct development activities, permitting, Outer Continental Shelf [OCS] activities, and federal financial assistance to municipalities) that is in or affects the resources or uses of that states coastal zone must be consistent with its program policies. This authority is

called “federal consistency”. The means by which Massachusetts implements this authority are described in *Chapter 5 – Implementation of the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program – Federal Consistency Review*.

Chapter 6 – Implementation of the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program – Programs and Regional Technical Assistance describes the means by which CZM manages coastal resources. Key components of the CZM program are its regional offices, where local officials work with CZM to further develop resource protection programs. In addition to direct assistance to the coast’s many interest groups, CZM undertakes scientific research to ensure that its programs are indeed providing the intended benefits.

The Massachusetts coastal program is described as a “networked” program – rather than develop an additional regulatory process for this program, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has chosen to work through existing regulatory authorities to implement its coastal policies. CZM has entered into agreements with state environmental agencies that ensure that coastal policies are addressed when environmental licenses and permits are issued. *Chapter 7 – Key State Agencies* describes the nature of CZM’s relationship with other state environmental agencies.

Additional technical information, such as CZM’s regulations, federal consistency guidance, and copies of Memoranda of Understanding with key state agencies are included as appendices.