**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

[Date]

Contact:

[Your name]

[Your organization]

[Your phone]

[Your email]

**VOLUNTEER FOR A coastsweep CLEANUP AT FILL IN LOCATION NAME ON FILL IN LOCATION DATE**

Since 1987, volunteers throughout Massachusetts have turned out for the annual COASTSWEEP cleanup organized by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). Each year, form late August into November, thousands of volunteers collect literally tons of trash from beaches, marshes, river banks and the seafloor. As part of COASTSWEEP, a local cleanup is being held at [fill in place and date/time].

COASTSWEEP participants join hundreds of thousands of other volunteers in the world’s largest volunteer effort for the ocean—Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup—collecting trash, fishing line and other marine debris and recording data on what they find. This data is used to find solutions for keeping trash out of the ocean.

To volunteer for the [fill in place] cleanup, please contact [contact’s name and contact info] by [cutoff date to register]. [Add any further specifics about the cleanup: meeting place, rain date, refreshments or prizes provided, sponsors, etc.]

[If you did a cleanup last year, it is helpful to add information about that event here. You can also add quotes about how easy and valuable it is to participate, information and any instructions related to the ways you are making your cleanup “green” (for example encourage people to bring their phones to collect data and save paper, gardening or work gloves, reusable water bottles, buckets, or reusable bags to use to collect trash, etc.) and other relevant details.]

Sources of marine debris include people littering, trash blowing out of trash cans and cigarette butts washing into storm drains that connect to the ocean. Marine debris is more than an eyesore, it can also directly harm sea life and humans. Sea birds, seals and other animals can be choked, starved or poisoned when they mistake debris for food, and wildlife can become entangled in nets, bags, ropes and other trash. Beachgoers may injure themselves on pieces of glass, wood or metal while swimming or walking on the sand. Debris also poses a threat to navigation—propellers can become jammed with fishing line, boats can be damaged by colliding with large pieces of debris and plastic can clog cooling intakes. Because much of the trash collected each year comes from street litter, it is easily preventable by always using secure trash bins and recycling as much as possible.

For more on COASTSWEEP, including how to organize your own cleanup, see www.mass.gov/ coastsweep or email coastsweep@mass.gov.

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