

Chairwoman Susan Tierney
MA

Dear Chairwoman Tierney,

With all due respect, as a citizen of the Commonwealth, I am deeply concerned with the current state and future health of Massachusetts' ocean life.

1. Cruise ships in and around Massachusetts, particularly Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, are not being regulated. These cruise ship lines are notorious for dumping their raw sewage and bilge oil into protected areas. All raw sewage should be pumped off these ships into town wastewater treatment systems, not dumped into our precious ocean.
2. The Navy must not be allowed to go forward with its LFA sonar. The studies done on LFA show this high-decibel system interrupts the migration patterns of whales and dolphins, separating babies from their mothers. It also explodes the eardrums of whales and dolphins, which proves fatal. How do we know it doesn't also interrupt the migration patterns of the fish we harvest here on Martha's Vineyard to keep our economy going?
3. By-catch must be stopped. Millions of fish, turtles, whales, dolphins and other sea creatures are senselessly killed in our area every year because they are caught in the nets of commercial fishermen. This also includes gill nets, conch pots, lobster traps and long lines.
4. The perpetrators of oil spills must pay outrageous monetary fines. The oil spill last March in Buzzard's Bay was disastrous. They lied about how many gallons of oil were spilled and now our once pristine waters are tainted for 30 years, not to mention the 600 migrating birds that were killed.
5. There must also be outrageous fines for fishermen who leave nets behind because they get caught on something underwater. This is the reason fish populations have gone down drastically. Live fish every day are swimming into these giant net "death traps" and becoming entangled. In the industry it is referred to as "ghost fishing." It is a tragic waste of our natural resources. Nets left behind should be marked with buoys and the fishermen should have to pay for the Coast Guard to go in and remove all of the netting.

I commend Governor Romney for taking a proactive approach in launching the Massachusetts Ocean Management Initiative to better protect and manage our living ocean resources.

I also commend the Commonwealth's Ocean Management Task Force for its recently released Draft Principles and Preliminary Recommendations for carrying out the Governor's initiative.

While I support all of the principles and recommendations, I very much appreciate the Task Force's confirmation that our ocean resources are a public trust that should be managed and protected on an ecosystem basis for the benefit of all current and future citizens of the Commonwealth.

I support the first recommendation for the enactment of a new comprehensive Ocean Resources Management Act.

I especially support the recommendations that state agencies be empowered to designate special areas to protect marine species and habitats.

Also important are the Task Force's recommendations to update Ocean Sanctuary regulations, encourage public involvement in decision-making, and increase coordination with all levels of government.

As the Task Force finalizes its Principles and Recommendations I recommend that they not in any way be weakened from their current form.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Greenleaf
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