

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1063

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June 2, 2004

Governor Mitt Romney  
Office of the Governor  
State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Romney:

On May 26, 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13,158, which was created to protect and further expand our marine protected areas throughout the United States. E.O. 13,158 has retained the strident support of the current administration as well in its charge to protect these marine areas; however, the enforcement of this Order has fallen short of implementation in the waters of Massachusetts.

This Executive Order mandates the development of a national system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by establishing an initial list of Marine Management Areas (MMAs) to be considered for MPA status. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior have been working with coastal states, Great Lake states, and U.S. territories to collect data on sites managed by these agencies. State Advisory Groups with regional representatives have been created by these agencies to guide in the development of this list, but there has been a delay in fully collecting and submitting the data for the MMA list.

A complete listing of MMAs is vital, due to the lack of availability of any comprehensive database. There are many locations scattered throughout the nation that are MMA sites, but a network between these locations has yet to be implemented. Due in part to the lack of a database of this type, as well as the constant emergence of new technologies in our nation, some of our precious waterways have become vulnerable to development and the exploitation of their natural resources.

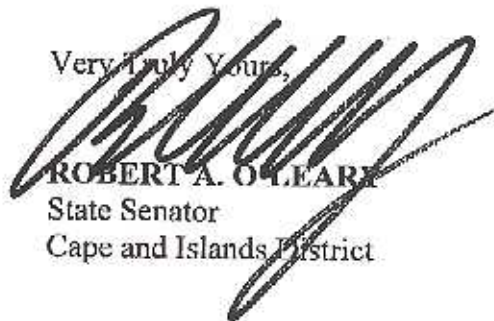
MMAs would be subject to protection of their geological, cultural, and recreational sources. Sites to be included in this inventory must meet certain criteria that are related to five terms: area, marine, reserved, lasting, protection, and cultural. I feel strongly that the Cape and Islands Ocean Sanctuary, which holds historical, cultural, and economic value for the people of the Commonwealth, fits the mold of an MMA perfectly.

Development projects in this area have the potential to endanger these core values and significantly affect marine animals and their respective habitats.

I strongly urge NOAA, the Department of the Interior and the organized State Advisory Groups to commence in the data collection for the Cape Cod and Islands Ocean Sanctuary and other vital bodies of water in Massachusetts. Through this collection, the Commonwealth waters will be permitted to become part of a national list from which MPAs will be selected, and any projects that fall within federal waters would have to maintain consistency with the goals of the Commonwealth.

I would appreciate any assistance that you may be able to offer in completing the data collection process for the MMA list and complete implementation of Executive Order 13,158 to support and conserve the diverse habitats and species of our Commonwealth waters. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If I can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my Legislative Aide, Julie Holstrom, or me.

Very Truly Yours,



ROBERT A. O'LEARY  
State Senator  
Cape and Islands District

CC: Secretary Ellen Roy-Herzfelder  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Commissioner Katherine F. Abbott  
Department of Conservation and Recreation