

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION SUMMARY BY TOPIC: ENERGY AND OCEAN USES

TOPIC SUMMARY

Energy and ocean uses were discussed at three of the five stakeholder meetings - Boston, Hawaii, and San Francisco - for a total of five breakout sessions. In Boston, two groups discussed energy; in Hawaii, two groups discussed ocean uses; and in San Francisco, one group discussed both energy and ocean uses together. From the five breakout groups the following themes surfaced:

Need to balance multiple uses – There are many actors with many uses of ocean resources, including recreational, traditional, commercial, and governmental. Need to be sensitive to different priorities and impacts on one another's uses.

Need more data - Energy technology is rapidly changing and there is a lack of available data on its impacts and uses. More knowledge about how ocean systems work and how they are changing is needed as well.

Need better coordination - Better inter-agency and cross-jurisdictional coordination around policies that impact oceans is needed. Many participants supported a more regional approach to ocean management, particularly in the areas of commerce, energy, recreation, and habitat. Many noted the need for sharing and access to data through a centralized source.

Need for more education - Policy-makers, commercial stakeholders, students, coastal zone program administrators, and the public would benefit from more educational opportunities around ocean uses, habitat, and impacts.

OBSTACLES

Uses and Impacts

- Uncertainty about climate change and impacts on oceans
- Multiple users, including public, governments, private sector actors, recreational users, traditional communities, with different ideas about how oceans should be used and managed
- No centralized source of data organized by ocean use themes, including energy, habitat, recreational use, and pollution

Management and Decision-Making

- Energy technologies and their impacts are rapidly changing and regulators and policy-makers aren't sure how to monitor, evaluate, and regulate ocean energy projects
- Energy infrastructure crosses multiple jurisdictions that each have different approaches to managing ocean-based energy
- Many actors at multiple levels of government are involved in policy-making that impacts oceans. Policies are uncoordinated and in many cases may be inappropriate.

- Lack of comprehensive federal ocean and energy policies
- No agreed-upon definition of “region.” Regions can be defined as ecosystems, jurisdictional boundaries, energy use and production areas, commercial zones, etc.

Education and Values

- The public and decision-makers don’t adequately understand the impacts of ocean uses. They tend to see the ocean as an infinite resource.

PARTICIPANT GENERATED SOLUTIONS

Research and Data Collection

- Fund research on potentials and impacts of using the ocean to generate energy.
- Develop a GIS database of human activities/uses taking place in the ocean, integrate the database with habitat maps, and study what activities are compatible, incompatible, and their appropriateness for specific marine areas.
- Commission an independent nongovernmental entity to conduct a process to define “region.” Process must include stakeholder and public involvement.

Funding and Financial Incentives

- Provide financial incentives for states and local communities to work together.
- Establish an ocean trust fund for ocean research.
- Charge users recreation fees which will be applied to ocean management.

Management

- Federal mandate for NOAA or CZMA to take a regional approach to ocean management. Regional planning bodies would consider energy, commerce, recreational, and conservation issues related to shared waters.
- Develop standards to help regions, states, and local communities to engage in marine or ocean zoning. Zoning might include identifying areas where wind farms might be located, what areas contain critical habitat, where commerce should be focused.
- Direct coastal management programs to adopt ecosystem-based management.
- Coordinate efforts of agencies who impact ocean uses, including Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Transportation. Identify lead agencies and empower them with multi-agency jurisdiction.
- Give local communities more authority and responsibility for managing ocean and near-shore uses.
- Fund pilot projects in marine spatial planning, which would entail research and environmental assessment, habitat mapping, social science studies of human uses in same area, and integrating this to create a plan.
- CZMA should adopt a principle of “proving no harm or minimizing harm.”

Education

- Convene a regional-level stakeholder process around regional ocean policy and to identify critical areas of concern, opportunities, and common goals, among other things.
- Capacity building, training, and education for agencies about ocean-based energy opportunities, challenges, and best practices.

- Public engagement and education about the science behind ocean uses, including energy, impacts on habitat, recreational use and its impacts, and commercial uses. Form regional citizen advisory communities around ocean uses.
- Develop coastal management and ocean uses education curricula in university planning departments, high schools, and grade schools.
- Require coastal management agencies to engage in on-going continuing education regarding current technologies, issues, and trends.
- Increase funding for education programs with a focus on enhancing ocean stewardship for students, the public, and businesses in the coastal zone.