Oceans and Coasts Talking Points For Regional Administrators

BENEFITS

- Oceans and coasts are priceless resources.
- More than half of the US population lives within 50 miles of the coasts.
- One out of every six jobs in the US is marine-related, generating $54 billion in goods and services annually.
- Each year, 180 million people visit US coasts and generate $600 billion in annual revenue.
- Coastal and marine waters provide some of the most diverse and biologically productive habitats on the planet.
- Coastal and marine waters support 66 percent of all US commercial and recreational fishing and 45 percent of all protected species.
- US marine waters include over 6,000 square miles of coral reefs, which are second in species diversity only to rainforests.

ISSUES

- Our coastal areas are among the most degraded watersheds in the country.
- Most water quality impaired waters are along our coastlines.
- Ocean and coastal waters have 9 major problems: habitat loss, nutrient pollution, toxic chemicals, pathogens, altered water flow, invasive species, marine debris, unsustainable fishing, and health of coral reefs.
- Coastal eutrophication (condition in an aquatic ecosystem where high nutrient concentrations stimulate algae blooms causing low dissolved oxygen) is likely to worsen in the majority of our Nation's estuaries according to the EPA Coastal Condition Report.
- 10% of the world's coral reefs are degraded beyond recovery; 30% are in critical condition and may die in 10-20 years and another 30% could perish by 2050.
- Invasive species are the second most important threat to global diversity after habitat loss; coastal ecosystems are particularly at risk.

EPA ACTIVITIES

- All 28 National Estuary Programs (NEPs) have completed their Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (CCMPs) and are now implementing them for the protection and restoration of these estuaries.
- We regulate ocean dumping of dredged materials, the creation of artificial reefs, some discharges from vessels, and municipal and industrial discharges to ocean waters. These protections reduce harm to the coastal environment and the people who use it.
- We have partnership efforts to address marine debris, invasive species, and other coastal watershed issues.
- EPA is a member of various task forces working to address coastal issues, such as the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, the Coral Reef Task Force, Hypoxia Task Force, and the National Dredging Team.
- Future EPA successes will come from good science, working closely with our partners and stakeholders, and focusing our efforts to protect coastal watersheds.

PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

- Conserve water
- Don’t be wasteful: Reduce, Re-use, Recycle
- Don’t litter, pick up trash, participate in trash clean-up days
- Choose non-toxic products
- Use minimal fertilizers and pesticides
- Make sure your septic system is operating properly
- Create wildlife habitat in your yard
- Recycle used motor oil, dispose of household chemicals properly, do not dump oil down storm drains, and fix oil leaks in automobiles.