

# PROTECTING THE NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY BIGHT

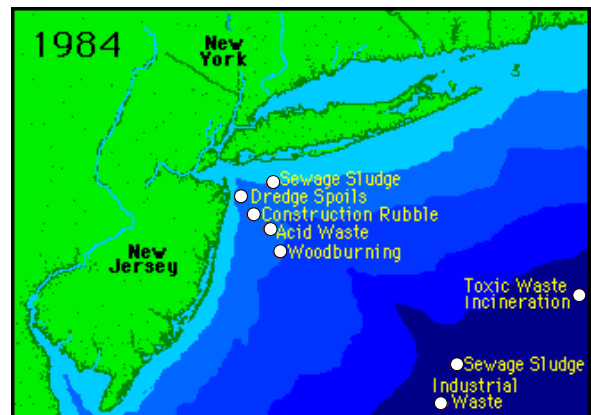
## SUPPORT THE NEW JERSEY/NEW YORK CLEAN OCEAN ZONE ACT - H.R. 2854



**Bottlenose dolphins in the NY/NJ Bight.**  
Photograph courtesy of Herb Segars.

Some stand at the water's edge and see an endless sea, a boundless expanse. One of the many fascinating ecosystems within this vast watery world is located here off the New Jersey and New York coasts. The coasts of NY and NJ and the Gulf Stream, a strong ocean current, create a triangular mini-sea "wedge" within the big ocean, officially known as the **NY/NJ Bight**. The physical, biological, and hydrodynamic characteristics of this 19,000 square-mile area are extraordinary as more than 300 species of fish, nearly 350 species of birds, 7 species of sea turtles, and many marine mammals, such as 25 species of whales and dolphins and several species of seals and porpoises, frequent this region. The ecological richness of the region is astounding. This fantastic seaway feeds the souls of millions and provides an economic mainstay for multi-billion dollar industries.

However, not so long ago, with eight ocean dumpsites, the Bight was the "Ocean Dumping Capital of the World." These dumpsites include those for dredged material, cellar dirt, sewage sludge, acid wastes, wood incineration, and industrial wastes. The Bight shows the results of this legacy of pollution: fish advisories from contaminated sediments, beach closures from runoff, storm drains, and raw sewage discharge, and littered beaches. Though those barbaric days are behind us, there are those who, looking to exploit the sea's riches and threaten its ecosystem, view this living resource as a cheap disposal ground. The Bight is still at the receiving end of the most densely populated urbanized area in the country, belching a steady toxic tide of poisons into the water. The fertile waters of the Bight are suffocating under the rainy day deluge of sediment, pesticides, petroleum, and sewage. The bounty-rich offshore underwater lands are seen by powerful industries as ripe for exploitation.



**The NY/NJ Bight was the "Ocean Dumping Capital of the World," with 8 dumpsites.**



**The Clean Ocean Zone is needed for continued protection of the ocean.**

### IT'S TIME TO LOCK-IN THE PROGRESS...

Laws and regulations are insufficient to protect the vast value of this ocean region and its living marine resources from polluting and habitat-destructive activities, such as ocean dumping of contaminated sediments, permanent extraction of offshore sand by industrial strip-miners, and offshore gas and oil exploration to name a few. These destructive activities undermine the economic potentialities for the sustainable living marine resources and must be prohibited. Elected officials must strive harder to protect the ocean. The current battles are fought permit by permit, which is time-consuming, unproductive, and exhausting. It is time to lock-in

the tremendous path of progress which has led to far-reaching improvements in our ocean water quality and lock-out environmentally harmful activities, thereby ensuring the continued protection of the ocean today and for future generations. Federal legislation, "**The New Jersey/New York Clean Ocean Zone Act**" or **H.R. 2854**, has been introduced in the US House of Representatives in the 109th and 110th US Congress. The bill awaits debate and action.

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*The Clean Ocean Zone is a project of Clean Ocean Action. Factsheet revised July 2, 2007 to reflect bill number.*

## **SUPPORT THE COZ**

### *THE 10 POINTS OF H.R. 2854*

**“The New Jersey/New York Clean Ocean Zone Act” will permanently protect the waters of the New York/New Jersey Bight, and:**

#### REDUCE POLLUTION:

1. Prohibit new ocean dumpsites.
2. Mandate capping of the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS) — formerly the Mud Dump Site — with progressively cleaner sediment to ensure the remediation of the HARS and to protect against adverse ecological effects.
3. Prohibit new point sources of pollution and increases of discharge capacity (e.g., wastewater discharge outfalls, industrial discharges).
4. Reduce pollution from stormwater and sediments. (This will be accomplished through state initiatives.)

#### PROTECT MARINE ECOSYSTEMS:

5. Prohibit the permanent extraction (e.g. strip-mining) of non-renewable natural resources, including sand and gravel.
6. Prohibit industrial and non-renewable energy facilities and infrastructure, including oil and gas exploration and development.
7. Require the development of responsible regulations for renewable energy sources. (This will be achieved by requiring determinations by two federal agencies that a lease, easement or right-of-way to establish a renewable energy facility will not unreasonably degrade or endanger human health or the marine environment.)

#### SUPPORT MARINE RESOURCE ACTIVITIES:

8. Support recreational and commercial fishing by acknowledging that federal and state laws for fisheries exist. Prohibit the COZ legislation from being used to adopt or enact fisheries management actions. The COZ legislation shall not be used to restrict or limit recreational or commercial fishing.
9. Support federal and state approved artificial reefs, and allow underwater research and exploration, but not projects that will adversely affect the ecosystem.
10. Support, celebrate, and sustain maritime activities that depend on a healthy and clean ocean, such as: boating, underwater diving, fishing, surfing, swimming, and the enjoyment of the sea. The COZ legislation will not be used to restrict or limit these activities.

### **Join the Wave of Support for the COZ**

Broad support of the COZ will be needed to reach its end goal -- federal and bi-state (New York and New Jersey) legislation -- and to lead to the permanent protection of the NY/NJ Bight. Concerned citizens, organizations and student groups, environmental commissions, and municipalities can help move H.R. 2854 forward. To support the COZ, municipalities and organizations are encouraged to pass a “Statement of Support” or a resolution. Citizens can sign petitions and send postcards to elected officials to urge their support of the bill. For more information, visit [www.CleanOceanZone.org](http://www.CleanOceanZone.org) or call Clean Ocean Action at 732-872-0111.