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**Washington State Department of Ecology - July 16, 2013**

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## Public asked to help shape coastal marine spatial plan

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is seeking public comment regarding what elements should be covered in a marine spatial plan for the state’s 375 miles of ocean coastline.

Ecology also is asking for public feedback about the goals, objectives, boundaries and other scoping issues that should be assessed under a related environmental impact statement (EIS) for Washington’s outer coast.

The EIS will evaluate the alternatives and potential significant adverse impacts associated with developing the marine spatial plan. The public comment period for the marine spatial plan and related environmental review documents is open until 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23.

[Marine spatial planning](#) is an approach adopted by the Washington Legislature to reduce conflicts among ocean uses and balance the benefits humans receive from the ocean while decreasing human-caused environmental damage.

The planning process collects, interprets and uses data to develop a framework for making informed, coordinated decisions. The goal is to bring different interests together to balance the needs and goals of the public, our economy and marine environment.

To assist with the marine spatial planning process, [Washington Sea Grant](#) and the [State Ocean Caucus](#) conducted a series of public workshops from March through May 2013. The caucus is a team chaired by the governor’s office made up of state agencies with management roles or expertise in ocean and coastal issues

The sessions included representatives from local and tribal governments, state and federal agencies and the [Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council](#). In 2011, Ecology formed the marine advisory council – comprised of a diverse group of coastal stakeholder representatives including coastal [Marine Resource Committees](#) – to advise the State Ocean Caucus.

The unpaid marine advisory council provides local perspectives about, and information on, solutions to marine resource issues, projects and conflicts.

Draft marine spatial planning and related EIS documents for Washington’s outer coast are available at <http://msp.wa.gov/news>. Comments can be submitted until Sept. 23 to Ecology electronically at [mspcomments@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:mspcomments@ecy.wa.gov) or by mail to Department of Ecology, SEA Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Wash. 98504-7600. For questions or more information, please contact Jennifer Hennessey at 360-407-6595.

Once complete, Ecology will submit the marine spatial plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for review and approval. NOAA will authorize including the plan as part of Washington’s federally-approved coastal zone management program.

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### For more information:

[Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/advisorycouncil.html) ([www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/advisorycouncil.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/advisorycouncil.html))

[Washington State Ocean Caucus](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/oceangroup.html) ([www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/oceangroup.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/ocean/oceangroup.html))

[Marine spatial planning](http://www.msp.wa.gov/learn/) ([www.msp.wa.gov/learn/](http://www.msp.wa.gov/learn/))

[Marine spatial planning interactive website](http://www.msp.wa.gov/) ([www.msp.wa.gov/](http://www.msp.wa.gov/))

[Marine Resources Committees](http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/mrc/overview.html) (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/mrc/overview.html>)

[Ecology's social media](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html) (www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html)

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