



**Florida
Ocean
Alliance**



2019



Florida Ocean Perspective

<http://www.floridaoceanalliance.org/>

Photo: Port Everglades



Photo: Mote Marine Lab

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*Representing Private, Public & Independent Sectors
of Florida's Ocean and Coastal Community*

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Lenore Alpert, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Florida Ocean Alliance

FOA Priority Recommendation for 2019

Make Florida a national and global leader in ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, scientific research, and innovative technology

With its extensive shoreline and adjacent ocean, the State of Florida has all the assets need to become a powerhouse in economic development, sustainability, innovation, science, industry and environmental management. But the economic engine that is Florida's ocean and coasts is at risk due to the impacts of human activities on water quality, natural habitats and marine resources; from natural disasters; and due to an aging and inadequate infrastructure.

With visionary leadership, Florida now has an historic opportunity to proactively protect and restore its valuable ocean and coastal resources and thus take full advantage of the economic opportunities and innovation they provide. To achieve this goal, a better understanding and assessment of Florida's diverse ocean and coastal sectors and economic trends and a well thought out strategic policy plan is needed.

The Florida Ocean Alliance has a Mission for Florida to achieve and sustain this global leadership position.

2019 Legislative Request: Appropriate \$1,000,000 to the Florida Ocean Alliance and Florida Department of Environmental Protection to prepare an Ocean and Coastal Strategic Policy Plan for Florida. This will include a regional stakeholder project to provide input for the Plan and an economic analysis of the impact of ocean and coastal industries.

Recommendation:

Direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to work with the Florida Ocean Alliance in a public-private partnership, to create a comprehensive and strategic ocean and coastal plan for the State of Florida that includes:

- A Florida Ocean and Coastal Strategic Policy Plan.
- Evaluation of social, environmental and economic risks and opportunities with identification of tools to achieve Florida's long-term strategic goals for global leadership.
- A statewide assessment of coastal vulnerabilities and potential opportunities related to water quality, climate change and sea level rise.

Return on Investment Value – Florida is facing crises along its coastlines, including degraded water quality due to harmful algal blooms and polluted runoff, as well as threats to its natural resource assets that impact marine industries. The final report will include solutions to address these crucial issues, strategic recommendations and an executive summary. It will be distributed to the Governor's Office, Florida Legislature, Visit Florida, CareerSource Florida Inc., Enterprise Florida Inc., and to the public through the FOA website (<http://www.floridaoceanalliance.org/>)

Why Florida Ocean Alliance?

The Florida Ocean Alliance is Florida's leading non-partisan, science-driven, private-public sector partnership. We are focused on innovative thinking, planning and implementation actions. Our goal is to protect and restore Florida's ocean & coastal assets, while at the same time promote responsible economic growth, diversification and job creation within Florida's ocean & coastal industry clusters. The Florida Ocean Alliance has been serving Florida as a private-public independent leadership alliance since 2000.



Priority Statewide Ocean & Coastal Issues for 2019 Legislative Consideration

These 3 high-priority ocean & coastal issues influence the state's economy through direct and indirect impacts to Florida's natural resources, job creation and retention, corporate relocations, economic growth and community quality of life. Legislative policy recommendations and funding decisions should consider these high-priority issues. A reliable and annually recurring funding source is needed to solve these long-term coastal management challenges. The state is now trying to protect Florida's valuable and vulnerable coastlines and natural resources with recent gubernatorial initiatives. Major reforms are planned to protect Florida's environment and water quality. The Legislature should complement these initiatives with legislative activity in the 2019 session.

- **Coastal Community Hazard Preparedness.** People, businesses and communities on Florida's coasts are at risk from real-time hazards (hurricanes, storm surge, flooding, coastal erosion) and future hazards (sea level rise). Coastal communities need tools, approaches, and technologies to assess their level of risk from contemporary and future hazards. Coastal communities need effective strategies to reduce hazard risks, impacts and recovery efforts to minimize the economic impact on coastal properties and coastal businesses.

Policy Focus 2019 - This is a pre-eminent issue for attention by the State of Florida, given that nearly 80% of the state's gross domestic product is at risk and associated with low-lying coastal counties where most of our residents live and work. Recent Hurricanes Michael and Irma highlighted the vulnerability of Florida's coastal areas across the state and the urgency to prepare our coastal infrastructure to weather these storm events. This issue is a focus of Governor DeSantis' Executive Order 19-12. The newly created FDEP Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection will help prepare the state's coastal communities and habitats to address these problems with new funding, technical assistance, and coordination among federal, state, regional, and local entities.

- **Coastal Resilience: Water and Habitat Quality.** Florida's recent water crises of harmful algal blooms (with red tide as a particularly devastating example), coral disease that is killing Florida's remaining coral reefs, as well as the recent Panhandle hurricane, have made important ocean and coastal resources a priority for both the economy and environment. Poor water quality from too little or too much freshwater inputs, in combination with excessive nutrient runoff, can cause harmful algal and cyanobacteria blooms (HABs), loss of fisheries, degradation of seagrass beds, impacts to tourism, and pose potential health threats to both humans and wildlife. HABs have become an all too common occurrence in Florida surface waters, especially in the Caloosahatchee River, St. Lucie Estuary, Indian River Lagoon, Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay. In the Florida Panhandle, lack of freshwater coming down the Apalachicola River has devastated the Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery, once one of the most productive oyster fisheries in the nation.

Policy Focus 2019 - Unnatural variations in freshwater flows and discharges and excessive nutrients from land-based sources threaten coastal ecosystem productivity, fisheries, aquaculture industry, tourism, and agriculture. Comprehensive water management strategies and innovative new technologies are needed to address this growing statewide crisis. This issue is highlighted in Governor DeSantis' Executive Order 19-12. It needs critical action from the Legislature.

- **Coastal Intelligence.** An enhanced suite of remote sensors and Earth observation technologies are needed to assess threats to our coastal ecosystem economy.

Policy Focus 2019 - Two key tools are needed:

1. Florida Coastal and Ocean Observing System (FL COOS) to establish a comprehensive and fully integrated network using latest technology sensors to track, monitor, and predict ocean and coastal conditions and trends for industry, natural resource managers, public safety, tourism, and homeland security, and
2. Marine spatial planning as a tool for growing Florida's ocean economy and preventing conflicts among stakeholders who rely on Florida's oceans and coasts.

Florida Ocean Alliance 401 East Las Olas Blvd., Suite 130-224, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

www.floridaoceanalliance.org

Vision

Position Florida as a national and global leader in responsible ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, research, education, and technology development.

Mission

The Florida Ocean Alliance is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to bringing together the private sector, academia, and non-profit research organizations in Florida to promote economic growth while protecting and enhancing Florida's coastal and ocean resources for continued social and economic benefits.

What We Do

- Serve as a clearinghouse for information on key ocean and coastal issues facing the state in both the public and private sectors.
- Monitor and publicize actions related to the oceans and coasts.
- Assist private and public-sector stakeholders to develop community consensus and common-sense solutions to complex coastal and ocean challenges.
- Promote Florida as a global center of excellence in ocean & coastal conservation, research, technology innovation and economic development.

How We Do It

- Outreach and educational activities for the public and policy makers.
- Conferences and workshops to identify problems and develop consensus solutions.
- Economic studies and issue papers on ocean and coastal policies, challenges and opportunities.
- Provide expert, multi-industry sector testimony to national or state agencies and commissions concerned with ocean or coastal policy.

Past Initiatives of the Florida Ocean Alliance

- Sponsor of Florida's Oceans Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee, FL (Annual event since 2001).
- Florida Ocean Alliance Annual Perspective on Florida's Oceans and Coasts: A Dispatch to the Florida Governor and Legislature (Annual dispatch since 2014)
- The Next Step in Ocean Management for Florida (2009).
- Florida's Journey Towards Marine Spatial Planning (2010).
- Oceans of Opportunity: Managing Future Uses of Florida's Ocean Spaces (2011).
- Oceans Generate Jobs for Florida's Economy: The Case for Ocean Management in Florida (2011).
- FOA Filing of Comments on the National Ocean Policy Draft Implementation Plan to the National Oceans Council, Washington DC (2012).
- Florida's Oceans and Coasts: An Economic Cluster Analysis (2013).
- Healthy Oceans Generate Jobs for Florida's Economy (2013).

Request More Information

Contact Lenore Alpert, Ph.D., Executive Director
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February 15, 2019

Board of Directors

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St. Lucie Co. Airport & Seaport*
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The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida
Members of the Florida Legislature
Florida Capitol, 400 S. Monroe Street
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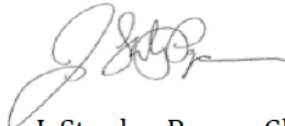
Dear Governor DeSantis and Members of the Florida Legislature:

The Florida Ocean Alliance is pleased to present you with our sixth annual Ocean and Coastal Perspective. In this dispatch, we share a single strategic and economically important recommendation and a funding request for 2019. We also propose three high-priority issues for consideration by the Governor and Legislature in 2019.

The Florida Ocean Alliance believes strongly that this single recommendation for 2019 Legislative consideration and funding will position Florida as a national leader in ocean and coastal innovation and planning. More importantly, this is a critical first step in assisting Florida's elected leaders to address high-priority ocean and coastal issues, grow and sustain Florida's ocean and coastal economy, respond to potential industry-natural resources conflicts, and prioritize annual Legislative funding for projects from a variety of revenue sources.

The Florida Ocean Alliance Board of Directors respectfully requests that you consider the Alliance and our member organizations as a valuable resource for information. We represent a diverse nonpartisan leadership partnership dedicated to positioning Florida as a global leader in responsible ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, education, and technology innovation.

Sincerely,



J. Stanley Payne, Chair