



**Florida
Ocean
Alliance**



2018



Florida Ocean Perspective

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

Photo: Port Everglades



Photo: Mote Marine Lab

Florida Ocean Alliance Board of Directors

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



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Julie Wraithmell

Executive Director, Audubon of Florida

Lenore Alpert, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Florida Ocean Alliance

FOA Priority Recommendation for 2018

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

The State of Florida has an urgent need to protect its ocean and coastal economy. This economic engine is threatened by aging and inadequate infrastructure, natural disasters, and human impacts to water quality, natural habitats and coastal and ocean resources.

With visionary leadership, Florida has a historic opportunity to position the state as a global economic leader in ocean and coastal conservation, scientific research, and innovative technology.

The pathway to success is to understand Florida's diverse ocean and coastal economic value and economic trends. This includes identification of Florida's many ocean and coastal industry sectors. All are influenced directly and/or indirectly by the quality of Florida's natural and human-built coastal and ocean assets.

Florida Ocean Alliance has a Mission to promote and sustain this global leadership position.

2018 Legislative Request: Appropriate a minimum of \$300,000 to Florida Ocean Alliance and Florida Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a detailed and updated coastal & ocean economic analysis for Florida.

Return on Investment Value – The last Florida Ocean Alliance assessment was completed in 2013 and was based on 2009-2011 economic data. A new assessment is needed to capture important economic valuation and trends for Florida's ocean and coastal industries and natural resource assets. The proposed project will identify areas for potential job growth and industry expansion. The final report, including strategic recommendations and an executive summary, 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 public-private independent leadership alliance since 2000.



Priority Statewide Ocean & Coastal Issues for 2018 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.

- **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 2018 - 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. Hurricane Irma heightened attention on the vulnerability of Florida's coastal areas across the state and the urgency to prepare our coastal infrastructure to weather these storm events.

- **Coastal Water and Habitat Quality.** 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 2018 - Unnatural variations in freshwater flows and discharges 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.

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

Policy Focus 2018 - 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 between stakeholders who rely on Florida's oceans and coasts.



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).
- 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).
- Florida Ocean Alliance Annual Perspective on Florida's Oceans and Coast: A Dispatch to the Florida Governor and Legislature (Annual dispatch since 2014)

Request More Information

Contact Lenore Alpert, Ph.D. Executive Director
lalpert@floridaoceanalliance.org

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January 5, 2018

The Honorable Rick Scott, Governor of Florida
Members of the Florida Legislature
Florida Capitol, 400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott and Members of the Florida Legislature:

The Florida Ocean Alliance is pleased to present you with our fourth annual Ocean and Coastal Perspective 2018. In this dispatch, we share a single strategic and economically important recommendation and request for 2018. We also provide 3 high-priority issues for consideration by the Governor and Legislature in 2018.

The Florida Ocean Alliance believes strongly that this single recommendation for 2018 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 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven M. Cernak".

Steven M. Cernak, Chair