



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS

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October 22, 2014

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
ATTN: Ocean Plan
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02114

Robert L. Whritenour, Jr.
Town Administrator

RE: Comments on 2014 Draft Ocean Plan – Town of Oak Bluffs

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Town of Oak Bluffs is encouraged to see the issue of sand mining included in the 2014 draft Ocean Plan. The Town strongly supports the use of sand mining in Massachusetts.

The mining of offshore sand is critical to the protection of our coastal beaches - their recreational value, natural resources value and economic value.

The beaches of Oak Bluffs – free and open to the public – are the economic backbone of this island resort community. Preservation of the beaches through beach nourishment will preserve the beaches and protect the coastal roads and infrastructure from erosion and storm damage.

There is little sand left in our coastal system to naturally nourish our beaches. Inland sand sources are limited and expensive. Dredge material is not a constant source of nourishment material. Ocean sand mining is critical to preserve the coastal resources of Massachusetts.

The Town of Oak Bluffs is working hard to adapt to climate change impacts. It has become clear to us that without the availability of offshore sand sources we will be unable to preserve our coastal resources. Oak Bluffs is a peninsula on an island – we are at great risk of the impact of sea level rise, stronger storms, storm surge, flooding and erosion.

I strongly encourage MA Coastal Zone Management to pursue the use of ocean sand sources for beach and dune nourishment in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Whritenour, Jr.
Town Administrator