

Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

Terms of Reference • June 7, 2006

Scope

The Governments of Maine, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, and Nova Scotia established the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment through "*An Agreement on Conservation of the Marine Environment of the Gulf of Maine*" (1989 and amended in June, 1992). The Council discusses and acts on issues that require or significantly benefit from a coordinated regional response. The *Agreement* directs the Council to:

- Coordinate conservation of the Gulf's ecosystem - establish long-term, cooperative environmental management strategies for the states, provinces and federal agencies;
- Promote sustainable development - promote the sustainable development and management of the Gulf's marine and coastal resources,
- Promote public awareness - improve stewardship of the Gulf by engaging decision-makers and the public in the development of progressive responses to leading management issues
- Expand our knowledge base - improve management of the Gulf by promoting mapping, monitoring, data/information management, and research on the structure of the Gulf ecosystem as well as the effects of pollution, habitat loss, and other stresses.

Role

The Council has three primary roles:

- a. Facilitators of integrated watershed, coastal and ocean management – The Council fosters an ecosystem-based management approach. It works to ensure decision-makers possess the necessary information to manage human effects on the ecosystem, to preserve ecological integrity and to sustain economically and socially healthy human communities.
- b. Enable the region's governments be more effective stewards – By working together in a regional forum the states, provinces and federal agencies learn from each other, try new approaches and as a result are better stewards of the resources they are legally responsible for.
- c. Sustain strong partnerships – The Council works to be an effective partner and build the capacity of local and regional organizations that are addressing issues of regional concern.

Membership

Each Governor and Premier appoints two cabinet level or senior level representatives and two non-government representatives from the non-profit and/or business sectors. Canadian and US federal agencies with a statutory mandate pertinent to the *Agreement* may designate a senior representative to serve as a member of the Council.

In addition, the Governors, Premiers, and the Council work collaboratively to make two-year, renewable appointments for representatives of the following interests:

- a. A senior representative of the scientific community from each country that resides in the watershed; and
- b. A member of the tribal community that is nominated by the region's First Nations

Responsibilities

Each Councilor is expected to actively participate in the development and execution of Council meeting agendas including follow-up actions. In addition, Councilors are proponents of regional responses and actively pursue methods to advance the Council's 5-year Action Plan and annual work plan tasks while in their home jurisdiction.

Leadership

Responsibility to chair the Council rotates on an annual basis among the states and provinces. During that year the host jurisdiction serves as the Secretariat.

Meetings

The Council meets at least semi-annually to conduct business at a location and at a time to be determined by the Council. The Chair of the Council, or his/her designee, will moderate the meeting.

Committees

The Council may establish committees as it deems necessary to fulfill its mandate.

Communication

The Council routinely apprises the Premiers, Governors, and others about Council activities and prepares an annual report that documents its accomplishments and remaining challenges.

Support

The Council Coordinator, Policy and Development Coordinator, and the Executive Director of the US Gulf of Maine Association provide the necessary staff support. In addition, other Council contractors, agency representatives, and committee co-chairs assist as needed.

Decisions

The Council will develop, as necessary, a unified consensus on policies and programs affecting its mandate. The Council may decide to vote on specific issues but the results are non-binding on those that oppose or abstain from the decision.