

STATE OF NEW YORK

11305

IN ASSEMBLY

May 11, 2026

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Blumencranz)
-- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to establishing the New York state office of ocean economy

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "New York state blue economy development act".

3 § 2. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds and declares
4 that:

5 1. New York's coastal and marine environments-including the Atlantic
6 Ocean, Long Island Sound, Oyster Bay Harbor, the Peconic Estuary, and
7 interconnected bays, harbors, and waterways-are among the State's most
8 valuable natural and economic assets.

9 2. Long Island, and particularly the North Shore and Town of Oyster
10 Bay, has a historic and ongoing relationship with the water, serving as
11 a hub for maritime commerce, shellfishing, marine research, environ-
12 mental stewardship, and coastal tourism.

13 3. Ocean- and coastal-based industries-including maritime transporta-
14 tion, aquaculture, fisheries, marine construction, tourism, waterfront
15 redevelopment, and emerging ocean technologies-represent a significant
16 and underutilized driver of economic growth, job creation, and inno-
17 vation.

18 4. The "ocean economy," also known as the "blue economy," encompasses
19 a wide range of economic activities tied to ocean and coastal resources,
20 and when properly managed, can simultaneously advance economic develop-
21 ment, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

22 5. Other states have successfully implemented centralized models to
23 coordinate and grow their ocean economies, including the establishment
24 of dedicated offices to align research, workforce development, and
25 economic strategy.

26 6. New York currently lacks a unified framework to coordinate stake-
27 holders, leverage academic institutions, support industry growth, and

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 ensure that environmental stewardship and economic opportunity advance
2 together.

3 7. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to establish a New
4 York state office of ocean economy within the department of environ-
5 mental conservation to:

- 6 (a) Position Long Island as a national leader in the ocean economy;
- 7 (b) Strengthen coastal communities, including Oyster Bay and surround-
8 ing regions;
- 9 (c) Promote sustainable economic growth and innovation;
- 10 (d) Support working waterfronts and maritime industries;
- 11 (e) Enhance environmental protection and coastal resilience; and
- 12 (f) Align public, private, and academic stakeholders under a coordi-
13 nated statewide strategy.

14 § 3. The environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new
15 section 3-0323 to read as follows:

16 § 3-0323. New York state office of ocean economy.

17 1. For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have
18 the following meanings:

19 (a) "Ocean economy" shall mean economic activity derived from the
20 ocean, coastal, and marine environment, including but not limited to:

- 21 (i) Maritime transportation and port operations;
- 22 (ii) Commercial and recreational fishing, shellfishing, and aquacul-
23 ture;
- 24 (iii) Seafood production and processing;
- 25 (iv) Coastal and marine construction and infrastructure;
- 26 (v) Marine tourism, recreation, and hospitality;
- 27 (vi) Ocean and marine technology and innovation;
- 28 (vii) Offshore and nearshore energy and environmental systems;
- 29 (viii) Marine research, education, and scientific advancement; and
- 30 (ix) Working waterfronts and harbor-based commerce.

31 Such activities shall be conducted in a manner that prioritizes
32 sustainability, environmental stewardship, and long-term economic
33 competitiveness.

34 (b) "Office" shall mean the New York state office of ocean economy
35 established pursuant to this section.

36 2. (a) There is hereby established within the department, the New York
37 state office of ocean economy.

38 (b) The office shall serve as the state's central coordinating entity
39 for ocean and coastal economic development, policy alignment, and stake-
40 holder engagement.

41 (c) The office shall work in coordination with, but not limited to:

- 42 (i) the department of state;
- 43 (ii) empire state development;
- 44 (iii) the state university of New York;
- 45 (iv) the department of labor;
- 46 (v) local governments, including those on Long Island; and
- 47 (vi) relevant federal agencies.

48 3. The mission of the office shall be to connect New York's ocean and
49 coastal resources to economic development strategies that grow, enhance,
50 and sustain the state's ocean economy while protecting natural resources
51 and strengthening coastal resilience.

52 4. The office shall have the following powers and duties, including
53 but not limited to:

54 (a) developing and implementing a comprehensive New York ocean economy
55 strategic plan, with a particular emphasis on:

- 56 (i) Long Island and the downstate coastal region;

(ii) revitalization of working waterfronts;
(iii) expansion of marine-based industries; and
(iv) protection of environmentally sensitive coastal areas.
(b) prioritizing initiatives that have a Long Island and Oyster Bay
focus, including but not limited to:
(i) supporting shellfish and aquaculture industries in Oyster Bay and
the North Shore;
(ii) restoring and expanding oyster and clam populations;
(iii) strengthening water quality and coastal ecosystems;
(iv) promoting maritime heritage and waterfront revitalization; and
(v) enhancing economic opportunities tied to Long Island Sound and
Atlantic coastal access.
(c) researching and innovation coordination, including but not limited
to:
(i) coordinating ocean-related research across academic institutions,
including SUNY campuses;
(ii) maintaining an inventory of marine and coastal research activ-
ities;
(iii) promoting commercialization of marine technologies; and
(iv) supporting innovation in aquaculture, coastal resilience, and
ocean data systems.
(d) workforce development, including, but not limited to:
(i) identifying workforce needs across ocean economy sectors;
(ii) aligning training and education programs with industry demand;
(iii) supporting career pipelines in maritime trades, aquaculture,
marine science, and environmental management; and
(iv) partnering with labor organizations and educational institutions.
(e) industry engagement, including, but not limited to:
(i) serving as a liaison between government, industry, academia, and
nonprofit organizations;
(ii) identifying regulatory or economic barriers to growth;
(iii) facilitating public-private partnerships; and
(iv) supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs in marine sectors.
(f) data collection and reporting, including, but not limited to:
(i) collecting and publish data on:
(A) employment and wage trends;
(B) industry growth; and
(C) economic output.
(ii) maintaining a publicly accessible online data portal.
(g) environmental stewardship and resilience, including, but not
limited to:
(i) promoting policies that integrate economic growth with environ-
mental protection;
(ii) supporting coastal resilience and climate adaptation strategies;
and
(iii) assisting in reducing risks to coastal infrastructure and
ecosystems.
(h) intergovernmental coordination, including, but not limited to:
(i) coordinating with state and local agencies to align ocean economy
policy;
(ii) providing guidance on integrating economic and environmental
considerations into decision-making; and
(iii) supporting municipalities, including the town of Oyster Bay, in
advancing local initiatives.
(i) promotion and advocacy, including, but not limited to:

1 (i) promoting New York, and particularly Long Island, as a national
2 and global leader in the ocean economy;

3 (ii) supporting participation in national and international forums;
4 and

5 (iii) highlighting the state's maritime assets and innovation ecosys-
6 tem.

7 (j) establishing an ocean economy advisory council:

8 (i) including representatives from:

9 (A) maritime and port industries;

10 (B) fisheries and aquaculture sectors;

11 (C) environmental and conservation organizations;

12 (D) labor organizations;

13 (E) academic and research institutions;

14 (F) Long Island regional stakeholders; and

15 (G) local governments, including representation from the towns of
16 Oyster Bay, North Hempstead, Hempstead, and the city of Glen Cove.

17 (ii) providing recommendations on strategy, policy, and program imple-
18 mentation.

19 (k) (i) submitting an annual report to the governor, the temporary
20 president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the minority lead-
21 er of the senate, and the minority leader of the assembly.

22 (ii) such report shall include, but not be limited to:

23 (A) economic impact analysis;

24 (B) progress on strategic initiatives;

25 (C) workforce and industry trends; and

26 (D) policy recommendations.

27 (iii) publicly make the report available on the department's website.

28 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.