

Open Letter of Support for the Adoption of Bermuda's Marine Spatial Plan

CALL TO ORGANISATIONS IN BERMUDA TO SIGN TO SUPPORT OUR OCEAN

To:

The Hon. Jache Adams
Minister of Public Works and Environment

From:

[Signatory organisations]

This open letter is being led by
the Bermuda National Trust



Bermuda's ocean is central to daily life on this island, but it is also under increasing pressure, and decisions made now will determine whether it continues to sustain future generations; — creating jobs, providing food security, supporting tourism and recreation, sustaining coastal protection, and shaping our identity as Bermudians. A healthy, well-managed ocean is essential to Bermuda's present and future prosperity.

We write in strong support of the **legal adoption of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)** developed through the Bermuda Ocean Prosperity Programme (BOPP), and its implementation through the forthcoming **Marine Development Act**.

Why This Matters Now

Many Bermudians have seen firsthand the changes taking place beneath the surface — fewer fish, degraded nursery habitats, and increasing competition for limited ocean space. These trends are not slowing and, without clear management, they will continue to erode livelihoods, community wellbeing, and economic opportunity. At the same time, experience locally and abroad shows that recovery is possible when management is clear, balanced, and enforced. The MSP provides a practical solution.

A Plan Built for Bermuda, by Bermuda

The MSP is the result of seven years of consultation and collaboration with a wide range of ocean users, including tourism operators, fishers, scientists, conservation organisations, industry, and government agencies. This process was not only extensive, but iterative, incorporating feedback, addressing concerns, and refining the plan to reflect both local knowledge and the best available science. This collaborative approach resulted in a balanced framework that accommodates essential ocean uses — such as shipping, infrastructure maintenance, fisheries, and tourism — while safeguarding areas critical to ecosystem health.

Clear Benefits for Bermuda

By supporting the Government's commitment to **fully protect 20% of Bermuda's Exclusive Economic Zone**, the MSP will deliver tangible benefits, including:

-  **Healthier reefs & replenished fish stocks**, supporting local fishers, reducing reliance on imports, & strengthening food security.
-  **Clear rules for marine development**, helping projects move forward with appropriate environmental review.
-  **Greater certainty for investment and development**, with clear spatial guidelines that reduce conflicts and delay.
-  **A stronger tourism product** built on vibrant marine life and ocean stewardship.
-  **Improved governance and enforcement** allowing resources to be used more effectively.
-  **Protection for Bermuda's coastlines and communities**, helping to reduce storm damage and safeguard homes, roads, and public infrastructure as climate impacts increase.

A Balanced Approach for a Shared Ocean

The Marine Spatial Plan reflects a carefully considered balance between conservation and use. It recognises the importance of tourism and fishing to Bermuda's economy and culture, while taking the necessary steps to replenish fish stocks and protect the habitats that sustain them. At its core, the plan reflects a shared goal: **a productive ocean that continues to support Bermudians for generations to come.**

A Call for Leadership and Follow-Through

Public consultations and surveys have consistently shown that Bermudians expect a well-managed, adequately enforced, and healthy ocean. The Government committed to ocean protection as a national priority. Legal adoption of the MSP is the essential next step in turning that commitment into action and demonstrating Bermuda's leadership in ocean stewardship.

Our Call to Action

We respectfully urge the Government to act without delay to:

- Introduce and pass the Marine Development Act
- Formally adopt the Marine Spatial Plan and the associated Marine Protected Area network
- Ensure it is adequately resourced and effectively enforced

By doing so Bermuda can protect what its people already value, strengthen its blue economy, and secure a resilient ocean future for all.

The opportunity to secure Bermuda's ocean future is within reach; now is the time to act.

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From the following proud supporters:



Bermuda National Trust



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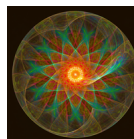
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The Bermudian

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Additional Comments from Supporting Organisations

The organisations below wish to add the following comments to provide additional context to their support for the adoption of Bermuda's Marine Spatial Plan.



Bermuda National Trust

"The level of support we have seen from across Bermuda's economy and community has been remarkable. These organisations understand that a healthy ocean underpins tourism, recreation, fisheries, climate resilience, and our quality of life. We have the science. We have the public engagement. We have the framework. Most importantly, we have broad support from organisations that understand the value of a healthy ocean. The decisions we make today will shape Bermuda's marine environment for decades to come. We have an opportunity to create a world class framework for marine management that restores marine ecosystems, strengthens our blue economy, and ensures future generations inherit an ocean that is healthy, productive, and resilient. Now is the time to move forward."



Bermuda Sub-Aqua Club

"Our club represents the largest group of organized recreational divers in Bermuda. We have seen the deterioration of Bermuda's fish stocks up close, and we believe that the balanced management of fisheries for the benefit of all Bermudians and in particular the creation of marine protected areas is vital to allowing the long-term survival and replenishment of Bermuda's reef populations, with the goals of vastly improving the snorkeling and diving experience for residents and visitors while still allowing a sustainable fisheries industry."



Bermuda Institute of Ocean Science

"Marine spatial planning, including marine protected areas and sustainable management are successful in supporting positive outcomes for coastal and island communities' ecosystems and economies. This is backed by scientific evidence at numerous locations around the world."



Island Time Bermuda

"As a charter boat company, we cater to guests who come to Bermuda to experience healthy reefs, abundant marine life, and a world-class ocean environment. We support ocean protection because it will help ensure these natural assets remain protected while allowing responsible marine activities to continue."



Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute

"BUEI is proud to support the adoption of Bermuda's Marine Spatial Plan (MSP), a vital step toward securing a healthy ocean for generations to come. This plan represents years of collaboration across Bermuda's community, bringing together scientists, fishers, tourism operators, policymakers and conservation groups to create a balanced approach for our shared ocean. It recognises the essential role our ocean plays in Bermuda's culture and economy, while taking meaningful, science-based steps to restore fish stocks, protect critical habitats, and manage competing uses responsibly. Bermuda's ocean is under increasing pressure. Many in our community have already seen changes beneath the surface, from declining fish populations to stressed ecosystems. The Marine Spatial Plan offers a practical, proven pathway forward, balancing conservation and sustainable use while ensuring clear rules, stronger governance, and long-term resilience."



The Reefs

"Bermuda's ocean is one of our greatest tourism assets. We support the adoption of Bermuda's Marine Spatial Plan because a healthy ocean and well-managed marine parks create exceptional experiences for visitors while protecting the natural environment that makes Bermuda unique."



SeaVenture Diving

"Every day we share Bermuda's underwater world with visitors from around the globe. We support the Marine Spatial Plan because protecting reefs and marine habitats is essential to preserving the experiences that make Bermuda a worldclass dive destination."



N233 Licensed Commercial Fisherman

"As a lifelong Bermudian fisherman, and most importantly as a father and uncle, I support the BOPP plan. My fishing forefathers easily caught 20 lobsters a day while snorkeling from shore and hundreds of pounds of tuna, wahoo, and rockfish. Those days are long gone. I want the highest chance of them coming back for all Bermuda's children, and that is why I support BOPP."



Nonsuch Expeditions

"Nonsuch Island's conservation success stories - including the recovery of Cahows, Bermuda skinks, and West Indian top shells- show what is possible when conservation is backed with protection. Similar successes can be seen in our waters, but only if action is taken before species decline beyond recovery."