For Immediate Release: May 22, 2012

**Press Contact:** 

Clean Ocean Action - 732-872-0111

## Ocean Defenders Launch "Tour for the Shore" Campaign The First Paddle, Bike, and Rally Planned from Cape May, NJ to Montauk, NY

Beach-goers urged to "**Get in Motion for the Ocean**" mid-August 2012 to raise awareness of ocean pollution threats, and support for a Clean Ocean Zone

Asbury Park, Atlantic City, Long Beach Island, NJ; and Montauk and Freeport, NY-- Clean Ocean Action (COA) a coalition of over 130 organizations, will journey from Cape May, New Jersey to Montauk, New York to bring attention to the need for a clean ocean and educate the public about the New Jersey/New York Clean Ocean Zone Initiative. This fifteen-day campaign from August 10-24, will take place on land and by sea – with rallies everywhere in between.

Facing threats from ocean blasting for oil and gas development, pollution, and reckless development, the Clean Ocean Zone initiative was created by concerned citizens along the New York and New Jersey coastlines to lock-out harmful pollution and industrial activities off the coast while locking-in permanent protection for future generations. The ultimate goal is for the citizen-drafted federal law to be enacted.

Joined by friends and supporters of the ocean, ocean advocate and paddling enthusiast Margo Pellegrino will travel by outrigger canoe along the shoreline while Clean Ocean Action's Coastal Policy Attorney Sean Dixon hits the pavement on a road bicycle. Rallies, action-tables, and beach teams will be held along the way in every coastal district and elected leaders will be urged to participate and support the initiative. The tour is scheduled to take place during the peak of the shore's tourist season providing the coalition the opportunity to reach tens of thousands of people with one message: "The time is now for the Clean Ocean Zone."

"The region from Cape May NJ to Montauk, NY is currently known as the 'New Jersey New York Bight', and that's just not good enough," said **Cindy Zipf, COA Executive Director.** "Citizens have worked hard for over 25 years to turn our ocean from a national joke to a premier tourism destination and it is now time for us to lock in that success and become the nation's first Clean Ocean Zone," she added

The Clean Ocean Zone law would reduce pollution by prohibiting ocean-dumpsites and new wastewater discharge outfalls. Marine ecosystems would be protected by prohibiting industrialization such as strip mining, oil and gas drilling and development, and the construction of non-renewable energy facilities like fossil fuel energy ports. The Clean Ocean Zone would support artificial reefs, beach replenishment, recreational and commercial fishing, responsible development of renewable energy, and all truly clean ocean activities.

"A clean and healthy ocean is essential for our beach businesses and long term health," said **Margo Pellegrino**. "I'd hate to think of having a disaster along our shores like what happened in the Gulf of

Mexico, and there is simply no need for our beaches and ocean to be put at that risk. The way the NY/NJ

bight is already impacted by non-point source pollution and overburdened sewer plants, the very last thing it needs is an LNG terminal or seismic exploration or oil/gas drilling. We need to look at alternative sources of energy and better energy conservation; putting blinders on to reality and doing the same old thing (ie, reliance on fossil fuels whether they be coal, oil, or gas) is not helping us to make the needed changes the continuation of our species demands. We simply cannot live without our ocean. Let's start by protecting this part on which so many people depend," she added.

No stranger to raising awareness for the ocean, Margo Pellegrino has paddled into and through coastal communities from Miami to Maine (2007), the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays (2008), the eastern Gulf Coast (2009), and Seattle to San Diego (2010) in order to educate and engage the public. She is a New Jersey native and a mother of two who is dedicated to help draw attention to the threats the oceans face and inspire individuals to take an active role in protecting them.

"We hope cyclists, surfers, families, kayakers, and beachgoers will grab a bike or a board and join us as we make our way up the coast," said **Sean Dixon**, **the COA attorney** excited to be making his first cycling adventure for-a-cause. "We will have maps and timetables online – as well as difficulty estimates – to help anyone who wants to participate decide the best way to take action for the ocean," Dixon added.

Under the banner, "Get in Motion for the Ocean," surfers, paddlers, cyclists, and ocean enthusiasts of all experience levels will be invited to join Pellegrino and Dixon at any time during the "Tour for the Shore." The public can also attend the rallies and sign up for the future campaigns and circulate petitions. Interested citizens will be able to view the campaign's website to review, the distance, date, location and difficulty level of each leg.

"The idea is to hold a series of campaign events along the route of the tour so that people everywhere can learn about the ocean and how to protect it," said **Rav Freidel of Concerned Citizens of Montauk** "Whether you paddle, bike, fish, or just love a day at the beach, it is time to stand up and say together 'We love our ocean and we want our elected officials to permanently protect it,'" Freidel said, adding that rallies would be held to show lawmakers just how many people support the Clean Ocean Zone.

"The approximately 175 members of Garden Club of Long Beach Island are committed to following ecologically sound practices and to supporting actions that will protect the environment. Beginning in 1987, the club joined others in stopping the dumping of waste off the New Jersey shores. We participated in advocating for the Nation's first Fertilizer Bill which was passed in New Jersey to protect the health of our bodies of water," said Mary Wildling, Environmental Consultant with the Garden Club of Long Beach Island. "Along with Alliance of the Living Ocean and Clean Ocean Action, we participated in Hands Across the Sand, a national gathering to oppose offshore drilling and supporting clean energy as well as joining in beach and bay clean-up efforts. Now we would like to join others in making the Tour for the Shore a huge success by bringing public attention to the critical need to protect our ocean and generating interest in the Clean Ocean Zone legislative initiative. August is the perfect time to reach many on our island."

"WATERSPIRIT, a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, recognizes the sacredness of nature, the interdependence throughout creation, and the role of water in sustaining all life," said **Joan Carey ssj, Assistant Director of WATERSPIRIT**. "When we see proposals such as seismic testing, oil and gas development, and pollution from dumping by industry and other sources that threaten the community of life that is the ocean, we join with growing numbers of various faith and spirituality traditions and with other environmental groups to protect the generations of ocean life and the interconnected

generations of human life that will be adversely affected. It is time to lock in protection for The Clean Ocean Zone, an area rich in life and under threat of degradation from industrialization and other forms of pollution."

"Joining up with Tour for the Shore this summer is a great way for everyone to protect our oceans-a common resource-from extreme energy development," added **Rachel Dawn Davis, New Jersey Organizer for Food & Water Watch New Jersey**. "Rather than allowing risky infrastructure for deep water drilling and export facilities for fracked gas, policy makers should be standing for a Clean Ocean Zone, ensuring our oceans are preserved for future generations."

"Alliance for a Living Ocean is thrilled to be a part of this monumental step towards a clean and healthy ocean in our region," said Chris Huch, Executive Director of Alliance for a Living Ocean. "We look forward to assisting our friends at Clean Ocean Action and will heavily focus on the Clean Ocean Zone initiative throughout the summer during events, lectures, and educational series."

The Tour will be kicking off on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 in Cape May and making its way up the coast, through New York City, and along the South Shore of Long Island. The Tour will finish in Montauk, NY on Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012. To finish strong, there will be a 100-mile "Century Ride" from Babylon, NY to Montauk kicking off at the break of dawn on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> – bringing Dixon and other cyclists to Montauk at the same time as Pellegrino and other paddlers-at-sea.

For details about the legs, dates, and locations of the Tour visit www.cleanoceanzone.org

To find out more about this summer's tour and to find out how to participate, please visit www.cleanoceanaction.org or call Clean Ocean Action at 732-872-0111.

## **Tentative Tour Dates & Route Rally Stops**

Friday, August 10 - Cape May Point Launch – Avalon

Saturday, August 11 - Avalon – Ocean City – Atlantic City

Sunday, August 12 - Atlantic City – South Long Beach – Barnegat Light

Monday, August 13 - Barnegat Light – Seaside – Point Pleasant Beach

Tuesday, August 14 - Point Pleasant – Belmar – Sandy Hook

Wednesday, August 15 - Sandy Hook - Keansburg - Staten Island - Manhattan

Thursday, August 16 - Weather/Flex Day

Friday, August 17 - Manhattan – Coney Island – Atlantic Beach

Saturday, August 18 - Atlantic Beach – Robert Moses State Park

Sunday, August 19 - Robert Moses State Park – Mastic Beach

Monday, August 20 - Weather/Flex Day

Tuesday, August 21 - Mastic Beach – Shinnecock County Park

Wednesday, August 22 - Weather/Flex Day

Thursday, August 23 - Shinnecock County Park – Montauk Point

Friday August 24 - Long Island Century Ride & Final Celebration in Montauk