

United States Department of Commerce

**Combined Coastal Management Program and
Final Environmental Impact Statement for
the State of Minnesota**

May 1999

Prepared by:

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ABSTRACT

DESIGNATION: Final Environmental Impact Statement

TITLE: Proposed Federal Approval of the Minnesota Coastal Management Program

ABSTRACT: The State of Minnesota has submitted its Coastal Management Program as Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program (MLSCP) to the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management for approval pursuant to Section 306 of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 as amended (CZMA), 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq. Approval would allow program administrative grants to be awarded to the state and would require that federal actions be consistent with the program. This document includes a copy of the program, which is a comprehensive management program for coastal land and water use activities. It consists of numerous policies on diverse management issues which are administered under Minnesota laws and is the culmination of several years of program development. Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program promotes the beneficial use of coastal resources, prevents their impairment, and manages major activities that substantially affect numerous resources. The program will enhance decision-making processes used for determining the appropriateness of actions in the coastal area.

Approval and implementation of the program will enhance governance of Minnesota's coastal land and water uses according to the coastal policies and standards contained in Minnesota's statutes, authorities and rules. Federal alternatives to program approval include delaying or denying approval, if certain requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act have not been met. The state could modify parts of the program or withdraw its application for federal approval if either of the above federal alternatives results from circulation of this document. This document includes responses to comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in June 1998.

APPLICANT: State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources

LEAD AGENCY: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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NOTE TO READERS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires that an environmental impact statement be prepared as part of the review and approval process by federal government agencies of major actions which significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The federal action contemplated is approval of Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program (MLSCP) under Section 306 of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended (CZMA). It is the general policy of the Federal Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to issue combined environmental impact statements and program documents.

Part I and Part II of this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) were prepared jointly by the State of Minnesota and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, and provide summary information concerning Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program, including how the state has addressed the requirements of the CZMA. Part V and Part VI of this FEIS are a description of Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program that were prepared by the state. It has been reviewed by the OCRM and is relied upon as a description of the proposed action for purposes of NEPA. Part III and Part IV fulfill the remaining NEPA requirements for a FEIS and were prepared by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management with assistance from the State of Minnesota. Part VII contains public comments on the DEIS and NOAA's response to those comments.

An immediate effect of federal approval of the Minnesota program is the qualification of the state for federal matching of funds for use in administering the program. In addition, the CZMA provides a procedure for the state to review federal actions for consistency with its approved coastal management program.

For purposes of reviewing this proposed action, the key questions are:

- whether the Minnesota program is consistent with the objectives and policies of the national legislation;
- whether the award of federal funds under Section 306 of the federal act will help Minnesota to meet those objectives;
- whether Minnesota management policies and authorities are adequate to implement the program;
- whether there will be a net environmental gain as a result of program approval and implementation.

OCRM has made a preliminary determination that the answers to these questions are affirmative.