Coastal Development – Draft Council Policy

General

1. Avoid coastal development in sensitive benthic habitat such as submerged aquatic vegetation, wetlands, complex bottom, and other priority fish habitats.

2. Preserve coastal upland buffers between buildings/infrastructure and wetlands and sand dunes, to allow for the inland migration of habitats as sea levels rise.

3. Preference should be given to the use of softer or “living” shoreline stabilization methods for coastal development, which can offer an alternative form of erosion control, with less severe habitat impacts than “hard” shoreline stabilization methods (e.g., concrete bulkheads and seawalls, concrete or rock revetments).

4. Projects should consider efforts to preserve and enhance fishery habitat to offset impacts (e.g., provide for nursery habitats and marsh areas through soft/living shoreline methods, removing barriers to natural fish passage).

5. Avoid installing new water control structures in wetlands and streams.

6. Use seasonal restrictions and spatial buffers on coastal development activities to limit negative impacts during fish spawning, egg development, young-of-year development, and migration periods, and to avoid secondary impacts to sensitive habitat areas.

Dredge Material Disposal

1. Ensure that all options for disposal of dredged materials are comprehensively assessed. The consideration of upland alternatives for dredged material disposal sites should be evaluated before wetland or offshore sites are considered.

2. Consider beneficial uses for uncontaminated sediments when practicable and feasible. Priority should be given to beneficial uses of material that contributes to habitat restoration and enhancement, landscape ecology approaches, and includes pre- and post-disposal surveys.

3. Avoid dredged material disposal activities in areas containing sensitive or unique benthic habitats.
**Beach Nourishment**

1. Avoid sand mining in areas containing sensitive marine benthic habitats (e.g., spawning and feeding sites, hard bottom, cobble/gravel substrate, shellfish beds).

2. Avoid mining sand from sandy ridges, lumps, shoals, and rises that are named on maps. The naming of these is often the result of the area being an important fishing ground.

3. Existing sand borrow sites should be used to the extent possible. Mining sand from new areas introduces additional impacts.

4. Conduct beach nourishment during the winter and early spring, when productivity for benthic infauna is at a minimum.

5. Use seasonal restrictions and spatial buffers on sand mining to limit negative impacts during fish spawning, egg development, young-of-year development, and migration periods, and to avoid secondary impacts to sensitive habitat areas such as SAV.

6. Preserve, enhance, or create beach dune and native dune vegetation in order to provide natural beach habitat and reduce the need for nourishment.

7. Each beach renourishment activity should be treated as a new activity (i.e., subject to review and comment); including those identified under a programmatic EA or EIS.

8. Bathymetric and biological monitoring (pre- and post-) to assess recovery in beach borrow and renourishment areas should be required.

9. Assess the effect of noise from mining operations on the feeding, reproduction, and migratory behavior of marine mammals and finfish.

**Wetland Dredging and Filling**

1. Dredging and filling within wetlands should be avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

2. Do not dispose of dredge material in wetlands.

3. Ensure that filling materials meet or exceed applicable state and/or federal water quality standards.

4. Identify and characterize fishery habitat functions/services in the project areas prior to any dredge and fill activities.
**Water Quality** [develop this section]

Toxic contaminants

Eutrophication (DO?)

Ocean Acidification (pH)

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**Mid-Atlantic Managed Species with at least 1 Life Stage with the Potential to be Adversely Impacted by Coastal Development Issues**

Atlantic mackerel
Black sea bass
Atlantic bluefish
Butterfish
Shortfin squid (*Illex*)
Longfin squid (*Loligo*)
Ocean quahogs
Scup
Spiny dogfish
Summer flounder
Atlantic surf clams

Given the intersection of where most coastal development activities occur and the general dependence of MAFMC stocks on nearshore habitats, almost all MAFMC managed species may potentially be impacted. Golden tilefish (all life stages) are the only MAFMC stock not linked to the nearshore environment; due to the deep nature of their offshore habitat, they are not likely to be impacted by these activities.