

- For the action items, DOT appreciates the addition of the term “to the extent practicable” for those action items where a Federal “will” use the portal or conduct other activities. However, we recommend amending this clause to say “as appropriate” or “to the extent practicable and appropriate.” For example, while the multi-dimensional portal data will be very useful in a variety of applications, we foresee times as we perform our duties from the federal level, that we may rely on or reference original source data only and not complete a duplicative effort of reviewing the Northeast Ocean Data Portal as a reference. Additionally, we noted a few places in the attached red-line where this qualifier is missing. However, we recommend scrubbing the action items to ensure that the qualifier is included.
- We believe that the document would benefit by an additional attempt to remove redundant language and definitions. The substance of the plan is of great importance to provide stakeholders and the public with an understanding of the portal and its uses. However, the length of the plan may deter some from taking a full read, and thereby, realizing the utility of this new tool. For example, NEPA is discussed throughout the plan, often with a subsequent definition of the requirements under the law. We think one explanation of the law at the outset and removal of the additional discussions would benefit the plan as a whole.
- The plan emphasizes the ongoing need to maintain and update the portal. We believe that one additional requirement for all involved is to advertise and promote the plan and the use of the portal; however, we do not believe this is adequately addressed in the plan. Potentially, there is a roll out for the plan that will broadly advertise both the accomplishment of the RPB and the robust tool that now exists for ocean planning in the Northeast region. It might also be helpful if the plan noted that it is a responsibility of both the RPB members and stakeholders to encourage and promote use of the robust planning protocols.
- To facilitate an efficient, thorough review of the final plan during what we anticipate to be a short timeframe, it would be extremely helpful to provide reviewing agencies with a tracked-changes version.
- DOT has noted two examples of run-on sentences in the document. We recommend the document be reviewed to modify any other run-on sentences.