

## A PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR A NATIONAL COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Marguerite M. Whilden  
Maryland Water Resources Administration

### Introduction

Our nation's coastal conservationists had high hopes for the Coastal Barriers Resources Act (CBRA) as a means to limit coastal development in a comprehensive manner. CBRA provides for wildlife habitat preservation and minimizing the wasteful expenditure of revenues by curtailing federal investment on identified undeveloped coastal barriers. However, eliminating federal financial incentives may not achieve the desired level of environmental protection and hazard mitigation that Congress intended for these vulnerable coastal areas. Although the CBRA states that: "A program of coordinated action by Federal, state, and local governments is critical to the more appropriate use and conservation of coastal barriers," such a program does not exist.

Our coast is a national resource that should be protected against excessive exploitation. The federal effort initiated by CBRA should be expanded through the establishment of a National Coastal Development Plan which is considerate of 1) developed and undeveloped barriers and adjacent mainland areas; 2) natural interdependent coastal processes and capacities; 3) state and local economies; and 4) the private investor. Such a National Coastal Development Plan would rely on a quota system, individual state participation, and voluntary plan enforcement.

### The Coastal Barrier Resources Act

The Coastal Barriers Resources Act (CBRA) and the Department of Interior's report to Congress were important first steps in establishing a comprehensive federal policy for the nation's coastal barrier system. However, without additional cooperative federal and state incentives and disincentives, continued piecemeal development will continue on the nation's developed, partially developed, and undeveloped barrier resources.

CBRA and its accompanying studies provide an excellent basis for further-