

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING OF THE EASTERN PART OF THE GULF OF FINLAND IS A TOOL FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

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The region of the Russian part of the Gulf of Finland has been attractive for large infrastructure projects since the early 2000s. According to my estimate, about a hundred billion dollars have been invested over 20 years in coastal industrial and logistics projects.

All of them were focused on the export of non-renewable mineral resources and electricity:

- the ports of Ust-Luga, Primorsk, and Bronka were built;
- Leningrad NPP, became the largest in Russia after the construction of replacement power units focused on energy export;
- Trans-Baltic Nordstream 1, 2 gas pipelines have been built;
- Gas Chemical Complex is being built.

All this created good economic prospects for the realization of the country's export potential.

These projects were implemented in the territories of the Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg, which are important for the reproduction of renewable fish resources - the national heritage of Russia.

After all, all the rivers of the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland and the coastal shallow waters are spawning. The Gulf of Finland is a reservoir of the highest fishery value. Industrial fishing, fish processing and the supply of fish to the regions and for export were the main occupation of thousands of indigenous people.

In addition, there are 6 specially protected natural areas of international, national, regional and municipal significance. It is a source of biodiversity and reproduction of fresh air and healthy habitat for almost 8 million residents of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region.

To date, the potential of reproduction of renewable fish resources has been undermined. In the interests of big business, the borders of specially protected natural areas have been changed, recreation areas continue to shrink.

Thus, the implementation of infrastructure logistics projects for the export of non-renewable mineral resources and electricity has come into conflict with the conservation and reproduction of renewable fish resources.

Industrial fishing, fish processing and the supply of fish to Russian regions and for export have stopped. Since the beginning of the 2000s, 4 fish processing plants have been closed on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland. The traditional way of life of indigenous peoples, including small-numbered peoples, has been lost.

Experts of the Russian Academy of Sciences commissioned by the administration of the city of Sosnovy Bor 30 years ago, by order of the administration of the city of Sosnovy Bor, a comprehensive assessment of environmental safety was carried out. The experts came to the conclusion that the ecological capacity of the Koporskaya Bay area of the Southern Shore of the Gulf of Finland has been exhausted. Recommendations were made not to increase the anthropogenic load in the Koporskaya Bay region of the Gulf of Finland. It was proposed to organize a comprehensive environmental monitoring under the control of the authorities.

Unfortunately, these recommendations were not implemented.

Currently, the political and economic situation dictates the need to update the strategy and decision-making tools.

In our opinion, strengthening the role of regions and using the tools of marine spatial planning can become an effective mechanism for sustainable balanced development, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders. In order for this to happen, it is necessary to make a number of decisions:

1. To create an interregional environmental laboratory under the patronage of the governments of the Leningrad region, St. Petersburg and under the supervision of the Supervisory Board. It is advisable to include legislators of the Leningrad region, St. Petersburg, experts of academic institutions of St. Petersburg and the interested public.

The powers of such a Council should include the approval of substantive and financial reports for the past year, and the approval of similar documents for the coming year.

The task of the interregional environmental laboratory should be to assess the socio-ecological safety of national and regional projects and develop recommendations to decision makers.

The idea of creating such a laboratory in 2019 was supported by the Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights under the President of Russia.

2. Conduct a comprehensive environmental assessment of the catchment basin of the Gulf of Finland and its water area. On the basis of such an assessment, zoning of the Gulf of Finland region with the participation of interested parties should be carried out with the definition of zones:

- potential industrial development,
- agricultural activities,
- recreation,
- special protection of nature and biodiversity.

3. Transfer most of the water area of the Gulf of Finland under the jurisdiction of the Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg. It is necessary that the ecosystem of the Gulf of Finland and its catchment basin be considered as a single socio-ecological organism.

4. Develop federal and regional laws of the Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg on marine spatial planning. This is an urgent and priority task at the moment.

My colleagues and I in the Legislative Assemblies of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region are ready to get involved in this work.