

and state environmental lawsuits. In 1984, the governor and legislature created the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and gave it the massive job of reinventing the region's wastewater conveyance, treatment, and discharge systems. In 2000, the job is almost complete.

By historical good fortune, however, the harbor has remained predominantly an area valuable for its natural beauty. Boston Harbor is blessed with an urban archipelago of thirty-seven islands, which over the centuries have accommodated year-round and summer communities, prisons, lighthouses, social institutions, rendering plants, treatment plants, trash dumps, fortifications, and public open space. Today, the islands are mostly clean, uninhabited, and open to the public. Now that the waters of the harbor are also clean enough to support recreation and tourism, thirty of the islands have been included in the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. Families that once scoffed at the polluted harbor now take ferries and water taxis to this unique ocean park.

For many Bostonians, in fact, the "rediscovery of the harbor" over the last fifteen years means the MWRA clean-up and the opening of the islands. However, two other stories have been unfolding as well – the modernization of Boston's seaport, and the debate about how best to recycle those portions of the urban waterfront left fallow by earlier changes in maritime business and technology.

Boston Harbor has always been a working seaport, and the evolution of maritime commerce – wax and wane, obsolescence and change – has been a constant. As recently as the Second World War, Boston was one of North America's great port cities, in activity level as well as public image. Long-term factors beyond the control of the maritime community have eroded that position: the opening of the St Lawrence Seaway; the downsizing of the navy; the out-migration of mass-production manufacturing; the erosion of the North Atlantic fishery; and the emergence of more centrally located "load centers" or "megaports" as linchpins of a restructured marine cargo industry.

Boston remains New England's only large, commercially diverse port, and the maritime sector remains a major economic contributor in absolute terms. The industrial port provides some 9,000 jobs and \$2.8 billion annually in direct and indirect employment. Over 17 million tons of cargo moved through Boston in 1997, divided among containers, automobiles, dry bulk, and liquid bulk. One long-term factor that *has* helped the port is New England's increasing reliance on imported petroleum, which accounted for 12 million tons of the total. Boston's ocean cruise industry, all but dead fifteen years ago, is visible and thriving today. The seafood processing industry has stayed and modernized, even if much of the raw fish is imported rather than landed.

Massport

The institutional components of Boston Harbor are more complicated than in San Francisco. The key public actor in Boston's maritime industrial sector is the Massachusetts Port Authority, or "Massport." Created by the legislature in 1956 and operational since 1959, Massport is an independent revenue bond authority, whose seven-member board of directors is