

"Ecopolis Plan" of the Coastal Areas of Kobe City, Japan

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Kobe City, located about 500 kilometers to the west of Tokyo, is 544 square kilometers in size and has a population of 1.5 million. The southern part of the city, facing Osaka Bay, holds Japan's leading trading port. Since the opening of its port to international trade in 1868, Kobe has continued to grow as an international port city.

Along the coast of Osaka Bay, where industries and population of the city are highly concentrated, water pollution caused by the overloading of nutrient salts, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, in the enclosed bay water is a major problem that requires urgent attention.

On the other hand, the coastal area of the city faces idle industrial complexes due to changes in industrial structure, and deteriorated functional abilities of the port in the technological innovation in transportation. Some areas along the coast are not easily accessible or are difficult to utilize for various activities of citizens, and the creation of a recreational waterfront district where people can enjoy themselves is in strong demand.

With all these problems in mind, Kobe City has come up with an "Ecopolis Plan" for the coastal areas, in which appropriate measures to conserve and utilize the waterfront are laid out, with due consideration to the present condition of the coast and the needs of the citizens. This plan includes provisions for ensuring the sound ecology of the coastal areas, restoring or improving the quality of the water, and expanding space for citizens' activities. We are striving to realize this plan as we proceed with such measures as improving enclosed water and controlling utilities of coastal areas.