

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

August 4, 2010

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, we sincerely thank you for establishing a national ocean policy through Executive Order 13547. This action demonstrates that you recognize the importance of healthy oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes to the economic and environmental health of our nation and our planet. This new policy is a momentous step toward addressing the crises our ocean and coastal ecosystems are facing and will significantly improve the way we manage these valuable resources. We enthusiastically applaud your leadership in bringing about this critical change and for setting our country on a new path toward protecting and restoring our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

As recommended by the US Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission, championed by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, and most recently emphasized by your own Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, the national ocean policy replaces the current sector-by-sector approach with a more coordinated, ecosystem based approach to management. We commend the hard work of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force in identifying critical components for implementing the policy, including a strong leadership structure in the National Ocean Council and an innovative implementation framework for coastal and marine spatial planning. The collaborative strategy established by the new policy will improve coordination among federal agencies and their collaboration with states and regional initiatives.

Treasuring our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources is fundamental to our American way of life, history, and culture. Effective coordination under a strong national ocean policy dramatically shifts the way we manage these ecosystems so they will continue to be healthy, resilient, and capable of providing the goods and services that the American people want and need. Our oceans and coasts are valued by many, including fishermen who depend on these resources to support their livelihoods, local businesses that depend on the beauty of the coasts to attract tourists, and the many citizens and visitors who flock to our coasts and Great Lakes to enjoy recreation opportunities dependant on clean beaches and abundant wildlife. In addition to these services, healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems provide protection from storms, regulate our climate, and ensure an abundant supply of nutritious, local food.

Recent events in the Gulf of Mexico demonstrate how fragile these ecosystems are and how quickly lives can be upended when they are damaged. With adequate funding and a determined effort by federal agencies to implement these actions, Executive Order 13547 can ensure that our nation makes effective use of our management resources and scientific knowledge so that our oceans, coasts, and

Great Lakes and the economies and communities they depend on are healthy and vibrant into the future.

Thank you again for making the health of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes a national priority and taking action to create the new national ocean policy. The Joint Initiative stands ready to assist you and the leaders in your Administration as you begin the important work of implementing the national ocean policy.

Sincerely,



William Ruckelshaus
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



Norman Mineta
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

CC: Nancy Sutley, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
John P. Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy
Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State
Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense
Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
Tom Vilsak, Secretary of Agriculture
Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services
Gary Locke, Secretary of Commerce
Hilda L. Solis, Secretary of Labor
Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation
Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security
Eric H. Holder, Attorney General
Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget
Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
Charles F. Bolden Jr., Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
David C. Gompert, Acting Director of National Intelligence
Cora B. Marrett, Acting Director of the National Science Foundation
Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff