

April 12, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers:

As currently set forth, the National Ocean Policy has the potential to unnecessarily harm terrestrial and marine economic values by affecting sectors such as agriculture, commercial and recreational fishing, construction, manufacturing, marine commerce, mining, oil, gas and renewable energy, recreational boating, and waterborne transportation, among others. These sectors support tens of millions of jobs and contribute trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy.

Uncertainty continues to abound as to the meaning of the policy: how it will be implemented; the role of states and stakeholder user groups; its potential impact on the economy, budget, existing statutes and regulatory processes; and the authority of state and tribal officials. As the administration has stated, the policy “may create a level of uncertainty and anxiety among those who rely on these resources and may generate questions about how they align with existing processes, authorities, and budget challenges.”

The risk of unintended economic and societal consequences remains high, due in part to the unprecedented geographic scale under which the policy is to be established. Concerns are further heightened because the policy has already been cited as justification in a federal decision restricting access to certain areas for commercial activity.

Furthermore, justification for many aspects of the policy, including but not limited to the zoning component known as “Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning,” has not been adequately established by scientific data and information based on realities on the ground.

Finally, during this time of constrained public resources, it is concerning to many in the regulated community that federal agencies have been “instructed to prioritize” the National Ocean Policy in their Fiscal Year 2013 budgets, and asked how their “existing resources [can] be repurposed” in furtherance of this new initiative. Rather than expend federal funds to support new bureaucracies, procedures and regulations that could lead to further uncertainty, restrictions and delays, scarce taxpayer dollars should be allocated to existing entities, programs and activities that have been authorized by Congress and are necessary for businesses and the economy to properly function.

Given these concerns, efforts in Congress to achieve a pause in implementation of the National Ocean Policy, including through appropriation mechanisms, are welcomed. Therefore, we ask that the Appropriations Committee include language in all Fiscal Year 2013 appropriation bills prohibiting the use of funds to implement the National Ocean Policy. This would provide more time for oversight and examination of potential impacts, and help ensure an ocean policy that appropriately reflects and enhances the role that our oceans, coastal areas and marine ecosystems play in our nation’s economy, national security, culture, health and well-being.

An ocean policy that is designed to stimulate job creation and economic growth while conserving the natural resources and marine habitat of our oceans and coastal regions could be of great benefit to the nation. A pause in implementation would represent one step in this direction and help reduce the risk of detrimental economic and societal impacts.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Alaska Crab Coalition
Alaska Miners Association
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Alaska Oil and Gas Association
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Alaska Support Industry Alliance
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association
American Alliance of Fishermen and their Communities
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Loggers Council
American Petroleum Institute
At-sea Processors Association
California Wetfish Producers Association
Connecticut Commercial Lobstermen's Association
Consumer Energy Alliance
Crab Group of Independent Harvesters
CropLife America
Destin Charter Boat Association
Diving Equipment and Marketing Association
Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association
Forest Landowners Association
Freezer Longline Coalition
Garden State Seafood Association (NJ)
Grand Strand Fishing Alliance
Gulf Economic Survival Team
Hispanic Leadership Fund
Independent Petroleum Association of America
Institute for 21st Century Energy
International Association of Drilling Contractors
International Association of Geophysical Contractors
LA 1 Coalition
Long Island Commercial Fishing Association
Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association
Louisiana Trade Consultants
Mexico Beach Charters
Montauk Inlet Seafood
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Association of Charterboat Operators
National Association of Home Builders

National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Fisheries Institute
National Ocean Industries Association
National Ocean Policy Coalition
National Onion Association
New Bedford Seafood Coalition
New York Sportfishing Federation
Northern Gas Pipelines
Northwest Mining Association
Offshore Marine Service Association
Offshore Mariners Wives Association
Organized Fishermen of Florida
Pacific Seafood Processors Association
Panama City Boatmen Association
Public Lands Council
Recreational Fishing Alliance
Recreational Fishing Alliance-Forgotten Coast Chapter
Recreational Fishing Alliance-Georgia Chapter
Recreational Fishing Alliance-Oregon Chapter
Recreational Fishing Alliance-South Carolina Chapter
Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.
60 Plus Association
Shallow Water Energy Security Coalition
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council
Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration
Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance
Southeastern Fisheries Association (FL)
Southern Kingfish Association, LLC
Southern New England Fishermen's and Lobstermen's Association, Inc.
Southern Offshore Fishing Association (FL)
The Fertilizer Institute
United Catcher Boats
United Fishermen of Alaska
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
US Oil and Gas Association
Virginia Charter Boat Association
West Coast Seafood Processors Association
Western Business Roundtable
Western Energy Alliance

cc:

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jo Ann Emerson
Chairwoman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman, U.S. House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense