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Witnesses: President Obama's Ocean Zoning Plan Will Stifle Economic Growth, Create Regulatory Uncertainty, Threaten Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Natural Resources Committee held an [oversight hearing](#) on “The President’s New National Ocean Policy - A Plan for Further Restrictions on Ocean, Coastal and Inland Activities.” At the hearing, Members heard about the potential job and economic implications of President Obama’s [Executive Order 13547](#), which creates a new, top-down bureaucracy that could significantly impact the way we use and manage our oceans and imposes mandatory ocean zoning.

“From fishing to energy production to recreation, our oceans are an integral part of our national economy and support millions of jobs throughout the country. Any new regulations or changes to the management of our oceans should be done thoughtfully and in full collaboration with those affected. ... This tangled web of regulatory layers will only lead to increased uncertainty for many diverse sectors of the economy; and, it will create demands for new spending by the federal bureaucracies charged with executing and funding this Executive Order,” said Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04). “This policy has been driven from within the White House under the claim it’s only an ocean conservation measure, when its actual effects could be far-reaching and economically hurtful to American jobs and businesses both at-sea and well-ashore.”

What They’re Saying about the President’s Plan to Zone the Oceans:

- *Through a myriad of drawn-out arguments, the recommendations allow for regulatory coverage of virtually every bit of land and any entity operating or living on it. Onshore energy operations like mining, oil and natural gas production, and electricity generation are also vulnerable to new regulatory actions. The potential impacts do not hit just the energy sector but also agriculture, manufacturing, and construction. To be sure, the reach could be economy wide...The President’s National Ocean Policy will exacerbate this [sic] uncertainty and add yet another maze of real or de facto regulation for businesses to attempt to navigate. This may in turn lead to even less investment in areas such as infrastructure construction, manufacturing, and energy production.” - Christopher Guith, testifying on behalf of the United States Chamber of Commerce*
- *“As currently set forth, the National Ocean Policy has the potential to unnecessarily damage both terrestrial and marine economic value by affecting sectors such as agriculture, commercial and recreational fishing, construction, manufacturing, marine commerce, mining, oil and 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.” - W. Jackson Coleman, Co-Managing Director of the National Ocean Policy Coalition

- *“[T]he National Ocean Policy is less about coordinating fishing activities with other ocean user activities and more about creating a new regulatory process for further restricting fishing opportunities for both the recreational and commercial sectors...It is simply not good public policy to create an additional regulatory process, to confuse lines of authority, and to likely end up fostering litigation due to inevitable inconsistencies in regulations developed under different processes.” - Jim Gilmore, the Director of Public Affairs for the At-sea Processors Association*
- *“Because we believe the impacts could be significant, NAHB strongly believes some type of economic analysis should be conducted prior to implementing any of the actions...any National Oceans Policy has the potential to create yet another set of standards and/or approvals that could unnecessarily impose significant impacts on home builders, private landowners, and other businesses while providing minimal benefits.” - Barry Rutenberg, Chairman-Elect of the Board for the National Association of Home Builders*

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