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**Testimony on “The President’s New National Ocean Policy - A Plan for Further  
Restrictions on Ocean, Coastal and Inland Activities”**

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Thank you, Chairman Hastings. And thank you, Ranking Member Markey and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you this morning to discuss the *National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*.

Introduction

The National Ocean Policy responds to more than a decade of bipartisan discussions and was formed to resolve a long-standing, well-recognized, and significant problem: the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are a crucial resource for America and they are in trouble. Previous levels of coordination both within the Federal Government and among Federal, State, local, and tribal bodies have been inefficient and ineffective, and have resulted in conflicts and delays that hinder economic growth, environmental health, and national security. In fact, bi-partisan commissions have called for a comprehensive policy and a more coordinated, integrated approach to managing our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes.

Congress created the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in 2000, and President George W. Bush appointed its members. In its 2004 Report, the Commission said that “[o]ur failure to properly manage the human activities that affect the nation’s oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes is compromising their ecological integrity, diminishing our ability to fully realize their potential, costing us jobs and revenue, threatening human health, and putting our future at risk.” The Commission developed recommendations that called for the creation of an “effective national ocean policy that ensures sustainable use and protection of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, improved ocean governance, and a comprehensive offshore management regime for the balanced coordination of all offshore uses.”

Similarly the Pew Oceans Commission, chaired by the Honorable Leon Panetta, identified in its 2003 report that “[t]he evidence that our oceans face a greater array of problems than ever before in our nation’s history surrounds us. Marine life and vital coastal habitats are straining under the increasing pressure of our use. We have reached a crossroads where the cumulative effect of what we take from, and put into, the ocean substantially reduces the ability of marine ecosystems to produce the economic and ecological goods and services that we desire and need. What we once considered inexhaustible and resilient is, in fact, finite and fragile.” The Pew Commission’s recommendations also called for “a principled, unified national ocean policy based on protecting ecosystem health and requiring sustainable use of ocean resources.”

The National Ocean Policy responds to these calls with a measured, iterative approach to designing a better decision system for our oceans. Built upon the findings of the two Commissions, and congressional, State, and regional efforts over the past decade, the new ocean policy lays out a process for Federal agencies, States, and stakeholders to collaboratively improve decision-making in a manner customized to the unique needs and desires of each region.

### Development of the National Ocean Policy

Demands on the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are intensifying, spurred by population growth in coastal areas, growing ocean uses such as conventional and renewable energy development, shipping, aquaculture, and emerging security requirements. Our resources, and the regional economies they support, are also under tremendous pressure from habitat loss, pollution, over-fishing, climate change, and ocean acidification. Federal agencies, which have jurisdiction over ocean and marine resources in Federal waters and share jurisdiction with State and local agencies in State waters, independently navigate and interpret over 100 laws affecting the ocean, coasts and Great Lakes. This confusing overlap creates unnecessary obstacles to ocean users and managers alike.

In response to the calls for an overarching ocean framework and to ensure that the Federal Government is effectively achieving its responsibilities and responding to the growing demands and uses of these resources, the President established the Federal Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force in June of 2009.

The Task Force was charged with developing recommendations that included a national policy for the stewardship of our oceans, our coasts and the Great Lakes, a framework for improved Federal policy coordination, and an implementation strategy. The Task Force released an Interim Report in September of 2009. This report was made available for public review and comment. The Task Force was also charged with developing a recommended framework for collaborative, regionally-based planning. An interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning was released for public comment in December of 2009.

The Task Force undertook a robust public engagement process to seek input from a broad range of stakeholders and interested parties, including thirty-eight expert roundtable meetings and six regional public meetings around the country, and received and reviewed more than 3,400 public comments submitted online.

Using this public feedback, the Task Force revised and consolidated the interim documents into *the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*. On July 19, 2010, Executive Order 13547 adopted these recommendations and established the National Ocean Policy – our Nation’s first comprehensive policy for the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

The Executive Order also established a National Ocean Council, comprising Cabinet-level officials, to coordinate ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues across the Federal Government and implement the National Ocean Policy. Through the National Ocean Council, we are improving the way we do business. By better integrating the existing efforts of Federal agencies and offices, and bringing together experience and authorities in science, natural resource management, economic development, infrastructure planning, national and homeland security, public health, and social services, we have taken an unprecedented and long-overdue approach to the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

### The National Ocean Policy

The National Ocean Policy lays out a comprehensive and science-based approach for Federal, State, tribal, and local partners to achieve sustainable, safe, secure, and productive access to and use of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. It says:

“To achieve an America whose stewardship ensures that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the wellbeing, prosperity, and security of present and future generations, it is the policy of the United States to:

- (i) protect, maintain, and restore the health and biological diversity of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources;
- (ii) improve the resiliency of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, communities, and economies;
- (iii) bolster the conservation and sustainable uses of land in ways that will improve the health of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems;
- (iv) use the best available science and knowledge to inform decisions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes, and enhance humanity’s capacity to understand, respond, and adapt to a changing global environment;
- (v) support sustainable, safe, secure, and productive access to, and uses of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;
- (vi) respect and preserve our Nation’s maritime heritage, including our social, cultural, recreational, and historical values;
- (vii) exercise rights and jurisdiction and perform duties in accordance with applicable international law, including respect for and preservation of navigational rights and freedoms, which are essential for the global economy and international peace and security;
- (viii) increase scientific understanding of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems as part of the global interconnected systems of air, land, ice, and water, including their relationships to humans and their activities;

- (ix) improve our understanding and awareness of changing environmental conditions, trends, and their causes, and of human activities taking place in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters; and
- (x) foster a public understanding of the value of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes to build a foundation for improved stewardship.”

The Policy also includes guiding stewardship principles to guide management decisions and actions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Based on the best available science, these underlying principles ensure the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the health of the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, and ecosystem-based and adaptive management of these resources; enhanced sustainability of ocean and coastal economies; preservation of our maritime heritage; and effective coordination with our national and homeland security interests.

The Policy builds off of years of effort and public input, and is built entirely within existing authority. While there has been long-standing, broad support for a unifying national policy, as with any new initiative, there can be anxiety about whether it will be better than the status quo. The National Ocean Policy proactively addresses this potential for uncertainty through regular engagement with stakeholders and the public.

#### Key Benefits of the National Ocean Policy

America’s ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes regions support tens of millions of jobs and contribute trillions of dollars a year to our national economy, through tourism, fishing, international ports, trade, energy, and other business. The lack of coordinated management among Federal, State, and local agencies has resulted in ineffective planning, avoidable delays, and increasing conflicts among growing numbers of ocean users that threatens these jobs and economies.

The National Ocean Policy will improve coordination at all levels of government and establish proactive and collaborative regionally-based planning among Federal, State, tribal, and local authorities for the first time. The National Ocean Policy also brings a broad range of stakeholders to the table to foster communication and transparency and better plan for the future.

This will reduce duplication and help address the current system of siloed, ad hoc decision making that frequently ends in costly permitting delays, or litigation. The result will be less waste and reduced conflict, more efficiency and transparency, and savings for American taxpayers. It will also provide for increased predictability and certainty for traditional and new users who are seeking to invest in building industries and jobs in ocean and coastal areas.

The National Ocean Policy also provides direction and guidance across the Federal Government to ensure we prioritize our efforts and apply limited resources to address critical issues that will produce tangible benefits for businesses, stakeholders, and communities.

The National Ocean Policy does not establish any new regulations or restrict the multiple uses of the ocean, and does not expand the scope of Federal jurisdiction. Rather, the policy provides a unifying framework for a more coordinated way of doing business that will increase the information foundation, transparency, and effectiveness of ocean management decisions we are making every day, sometimes with unintended long-term consequences. State, tribal, and local governments are and will continue to be deeply engaged as partners and leaders in the implementation of the National Ocean Policy, and it does not supersede or alter any existing Federal, State, tribal, or local authority. The National Ocean Policy is designed to and rightfully plays out at the regional and State levels, inclusive of stakeholders and the public, where many of the decisions impacting the ocean resource are ultimately made. Decisions on ocean uses will continue to be made under existing statutory authorities, as the intent of the National Ocean Policy is to make better use of what we have on the books already through more informed and better coordinated decisions benefiting States, regions, and the nation.

The National Ocean Policy respects and preserves important navigational rights and freedoms which are essential for the global economy and maintenance of international peace and security. Finally, the National Ocean Policy will improve ocean ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas so that we may continue to enjoy valued ocean uses including industry, tourism, recreation and security in a manner that can sustain them and the functioning ecosystem over time.

#### Progress on Implementing the National Ocean Policy

There has been significant progress since the Executive Order was issued in July 2010. This past June, the National Ocean Council brought together more than 500 Federal, State, tribal, and local government representatives, indigenous community leaders, and stakeholders and members of the public from across the country for a National Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Workshop.

This workshop allowed the Federal Government to collaboratively identify key challenges, solutions, and strategies for regional coastal and marine spatial planning, and respond to stakeholder priorities. For example, participants highlighted: the importance of flexibility in the scope, scale and timing of the regional planning process; the critical value of scientific and human use data to inform coastal and marine spatial plans; and the need for early, sustained and meaningful stakeholder engagement. The National Ocean Council is working to clearly highlight and incorporate this feedback into the coastal and marine spatial planning process.

The National Ocean Council has also established a Governance Coordinating Committee, comprising officials from States, Federally-recognized tribes, and local governments. The Governance Coordinating Committee works with the National Ocean Council on ocean policy issues that cut across political, geographic, and other boundaries. The Governance Coordinating Committee provides a critical link to and strengthens the lines of communication with State,

tribal, and local governments on ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues. For example, it is assisting the National Ocean Council in crafting flexible and reasonable guidance on various aspects of coastal and marine spatial planning, including regional planning body composition and operations, which recognize the unique needs of regions, states, and tribal partners.

It is important to highlight some specific agency actions related to the National Ocean Policy.

- At the May 2011 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting, the United States successfully worked with other Arctic nations to establish a group of experts to review application of ecosystem-based management principles in the Arctic. The National Ocean Policy was one of the bases the United States included in its proposal for an ecosystem-based management initiative. In light of the National Ocean Policy and its clear National adoption of ecosystem-based management, the United States was able to take a leadership position on the newly proposed ecosystem-based management initiative at the Arctic Council meeting.
- In support of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) "Smart from the Start" initiative off the Atlantic Coast to streamline offshore wind energy site selection and project review processes in an environmentally responsible manner, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) established Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Forces. BOEM is collaborating early and often with Federal, State, local, and tribal partners to identify areas that are appropriate for development, areas with high wind potential and fewest conflicts with competing uses.

As a result of the National Ocean Policy, BOEM incorporated the principles of the policy into their "Smart from the Start" Initiative and formalized involvement of relevant Federal agencies, and the applicable State, tribal, and local governments as well, early in the process via Intergovernmental Task Forces and an Interagency Working Group. In one example of this new way of doing business, the U.S. Coast Guard was able to ensure that an important shipping lane was considered early in the wind site selection process, avoiding possible delays and resulting costs.

- The National Ocean Council and the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force share important responsibilities related to the future of the Gulf Coast. The Council and the Task Force are working together to better integrate and coordinate planning, decision-making, and regulatory enforcement and ensure the integration of best practices, information, discoveries, and advancements in science and management of coastal ecosystems. These efforts will promote and sustain a culture of shared stewardship, both across Federal agencies and between Federal, tribal, State and local jurisdictions in the region.

- In support of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) "Smart from the Start" initiative to establish Wind Energy Areas off the Atlantic Coast, the U.S. Coast Guard initiated a comprehensive Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (APCARS), which promotes the management principles of interagency coordination and coastal and marine spatial planning, while supporting the goals of safe, efficient maritime operations in conjunction with the development and production of renewable offshore energy. The APCARS will focus on the coastwise shipping routes from Maine to Florida, near coastal users of the western Atlantic Ocean between U.S. coastal ports, and the approaches to U.S. coastal ports through the Exclusive Economic Zone. It will identify all current and new maritime users of the western Atlantic near coastal zone to determine what impact the siting, construction, and operation of proposed alternative energy facilities may have on existing near coastal users of the Western Atlantic Ocean.
- The National Ocean Policy reinvigorated a transformational partnership between National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and National Science Foundation (NSF). The NIEHS and the NSF signed a memorandum of understanding to support interdisciplinary research projects that focus on marine processes and systems that have potential to improve public health. This partnership brings together biomedical scientists and physical scientists, two very different disciplines who previously would not have typically worked together, to address the growing problems in our ocean that directly impact the public health.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) signed a memorandum of understanding to ensure effective scientific and regulatory cooperation on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) energy exploration and development, and to facilitate development of renewable energy resources in the OCS while fulfilling the stewardship and conservation of living marine resources and ecosystems responsibilities that fall under the agencies' respective authorities. This partnership was facilitated by the increased cooperation guided by the National Ocean Policy. As result, DOI and NOAA have increased their collaboration significantly on decisions related to OCS activities, including with respect to research and scientific priorities. They are meeting regularly to develop potential ways to appropriately align regulatory and decision-making processes, identify the best available science to support future regulatory decisions, and increase collaboration on oil spill exercises and response issues.
- In January 2011, NOAA and the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy signed a memorandum of understanding to work on improving the understanding of meteorological phenomena that affect wind resources and other terrestrial and offshore renewable energy technologies. Better information on

meteorological processes and improved modeling of the variability of the wind, sun, water, and other resources will ultimately increase the country's ability to predictably and reliably integrate renewable energy into the electrical grid.

- National Ocean Council member agencies participate in the execution of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan (GLRI). GLRI has focused its 2012 and 2013 priorities for restoration on two areas that align with the priority objectives under the National Ocean Policy. For example, an area of focus is the three specific watersheds targeted for phosphorus concentrations that are impacting the major geographic areas of Green Bay, Saginaw Bay and Western Lake Erie. These areas are all experiencing the impacts of severe Harmful Algal Blooms.

The National Ocean Council is also increasing public access to the data and information Federal agencies use in their decision making processes. Using information technology tools, agencies are making their data available to the public, businesses and stakeholders through a single, user-friendly portal to support responsible planning for the future of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. A prototype ocean information portal to provide improved access to Federal data for decision-makers, stakeholders and the public will be released to the public later this year.

#### *The National Ocean Policy Priority Objectives*

The National Ocean Policy is focused on making advances in nine priority areas with emphases on improving how the government operates by increasing efficiency and reducing confused and prolonged processes. These nine priority areas are:

- **Ecosystem-Based Management**
- **Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning**
- **Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding**
- **Coordinate and Support**
- **Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification**
- **Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration**
- **Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land**
- **Changing Conditions in the Arctic**
- **Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations, Mapping, and Infrastructure**

Through these priority objectives, the National Ocean Policy helps focus limited Federal resources on key areas and actions to ensure we deliver demonstrable outcomes to meet the essential needs of Americans.

In an open and transparent process with input and feedback from the public and stakeholders, the National Ocean Council is developing strategic action plans to address each of the priority objectives. Outlines for these plans were released for public comment in June of this year,



during which time public listening sessions were held around the country to hear directly from interested individuals and groups. We expect the draft strategic action plans will be released for public comment later this year and final plans issued next year.

The plans will be completed and updated, also through an open and transparent process, based on changing situations or as new information becomes available. This flexibility allows us the continual opportunity to engage with each other and with our most important partners – State, tribal, and local governments, stakeholders, and the public – to ensure that this effort stays on the best and most informed course possible.

### Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

What has become one of the most visible aspects of the nine priority objectives is coastal and marine spatial planning. Coastal and marine spatial planning is a tool to use science, include stakeholders and the public, and bring together Federal, State, tribal and local partners at the regional level to better inform and guide decisions regarding ocean uses. However, this concept has, nonetheless, become a source of misperceptions and even misinformation which has fed concerns from some sectors, and it is important to provide a more in depth discussion here to dispel many of the myths.

First, it is important to mention why the status quo is ineffective, and how coastal and marine spatial planning will address this problem. As mentioned earlier, the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes are subject to a number of increasing demands. Existing uses such as shipping and oil and gas development are expanding. New uses, such as offshore renewable energy and aquaculture, are seeking a foothold and are also expanding. As economic activity increases, there is also a need to maintain and ensure continued access for recreation and enjoyment, cultural use, and other important values.

Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities presently operate under a confusing and sometimes conflicting system of planning and management. Specifically, significant decisions with long-standing economic and environmental consequences are typically made on a sector by sector, permit by permit, statute by statute, and project by project approach to decision making with regard to these increasing demands. There is oftentimes confusion among stakeholders and the public regarding regulatory roles and a need for more effective coordination across agencies at all levels of government. Additionally, many times interested parties are brought into the discussion too late, or left out altogether. This has resulted in uncertainty for industry, unseen “show stoppers” in the permitting process resulting in loss of significant up-front investments, user conflict or confusion, costly litigation, and difficulty in adequately considering cumulative environmental and socioeconomic impacts. This situation – never ideal – is rapidly becoming unsustainable in the face of rapidly expanding ocean uses.

The National Ocean Policy provides a framework for collaborative, regionally based coastal and marine spatial planning that would be developed jointly with States and tribes and substantial public input. As discussed in more detail below, coastal and marine spatial planning is not zoning. It is a science-based tool that provides transparent information about ocean use, guarantees the public and stakeholders a voice early on in decisions affecting the ocean, and creates an inclusive, bottom-up, regional planning approach that gives the Federal Government, States, tribes, and regions the ability to make more informed decisions about how best to use and protect the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes.

Coastal and marine spatial planning is intended to ensure stakeholders and the public have a voice early on in decisions affecting our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. We know from experience that transparency and early and inclusive public engagement before a decision must be made on a particular activity, permit, or project promotes better understanding of all interests, improved information on which to make decisions, ability to proactively address potential conflicts, and avoids last minute surprises that can derail positive progress and result in additional time and costs. Under the current system of fragmented ocean planning and management, major and irreversible decisions about siting ocean uses continue to be made in a piecemeal fashion, often without careful or transparent consideration of other interests, users and impacts.

States such as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Florida, Oregon, and Washington are using marine spatial planning to better inform decisions and improve planning and regulatory efficiencies, saving potential developers and regulatory authorities' significant time and financial burden. For example, under Rhode Island's Ocean Special Area Management Plan, by incorporating the results of this planning process into a programmatic analysis, much of the scoping and alternative analyses required for a particular project under environmental review laws may be completed ahead of time. Similarly, in Massachusetts, information in its Ocean Plan enabled a proposed fiber-optic cable crossing Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound to be proactively planned with a route that avoids areas identified in the plan for protection (i.e., areas of important benthic habitat). In New Jersey, the state undertook a two-year \$7 million effort covering 72 miles of its coastline out to the 100 foot water depth contour to study the biological and physical characteristics of the area. The study results were used to create an environmental sensitivity index to help inform siting decisions offshore New Jersey. In addition, in the state of Florida, the Florida Oceans and Coastal Council, which is charged with coordinating the State's research for more effective coastal management, recommended ocean management using marine spatial planning as a framework for decision making. The Council, representing broad stakeholders, believes this approach serves to protect and expand the State's ocean and coastal economy.

In addition to the examples above, an example of collaborative planning at the Federal level was in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off the Massachusetts coast. In this area, data on whale migration patterns enabled the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the

U.S. Coast Guard, several other government agencies, and stakeholders to examine shipping needs, proposed deepwater liquefied natural gas port locations, and endangered whale distribution in a successful effort to reconfigure vessel traffic routes to and from Boston Harbor to reduce the risk of whale mortality due to collisions with ships. The new vessel route also decreased the overlap between ships, commercial fishing vessels, and whale watch vessels, thereby increasing maritime safety, and avoided conflict with the proposed siting of Liquid Natural Gas terminals in the area. Coastal and marine spatial planning takes this type of integrated, science-based, multi-objective, multi-sector, and multi-jurisdictional planning effort and applies it on a sustained regional scale.

The National Ocean Policy's coastal and marine spatial planning framework is intended to build on these efforts. It envisions nine regions around the country, each of which would engage in this collaborative, regionally based, bottom-up, planning effort through multi-jurisdictional regional planning bodies. Coastal and marine spatial planning uses a regional approach that accommodates the unique economic, environmental, and social characteristics of the nine regional planning areas.

The National Ocean Policy requires regional planning bodies to regularly engage the public, local government, Fishery Management Councils, indigenous communities, and other diverse stakeholders, along with scientists, technical experts, and those with traditional knowledge of or expertise in coastal and marine sciences and other relevant disciplines throughout the process.

The coastal and marine spatial planning framework provides significant flexibility for regions in which they can decide how best they would like to move forward. There is flexibility built into the timing, scale, and scope of the process, including when regional planning bodies get established or when a State chooses to participate, what part of the process regions want to start with, and the ability to break the region into sub-regions if that is what the region determines is the best path forward. For example, regions such as the Northeast and mid-Atlantic are well poised to move forward almost immediately toward more comprehensive planning and the National Ocean Council will focus on these efforts. Other regions may need to move more slowly and focus on discrete, near-term priorities, such as improved access to information, to meet a variety of management needs and inform decision-making. In that case, the region could use coastal and marine spatial planning to work with the relevant Federal agencies to further such objectives. The National Ocean Policy provides for this needed flexibility and we want to remain open to support all regions based on their preferences.

Coastal and marine spatial planning has been mischaracterized as "ocean zoning." It does not have a regulatory effect similar to terrestrial zoning that many are familiar with. The National Ocean Policy does not impose any restrictions on ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes activities. The National Ocean Policy does not direct that any area be designated for a specific use or be off limits to specific activities. The National Ocean Policy's goals and guiding principles for coastal and marine spatial planning expressly recognize public access and the need to ensure the

sustainability of ocean and coastal economies, and provide support for a growing number of important activities, including recreation, science, commerce, transportation, energy development, and national security.

Through a publically crafted framework to help navigate the myriad of existing Federal, State, tribal, and local authorities, coastal and marine spatial planning is intended to provide a better, healthier, more secure ocean for all Americans. Decisions will be made with the added benefit of having been informed and guided by regional plans developed from the ground up, with extensive stakeholder, public, and scientific input. State, tribal, and local governments will benefit by having a regional coastal and marine spatial planning blueprint to follow, and their participation is voluntary.

Comprehensive planning is not a new concept. All levels of government have been working with the public, industry, and others for decades to collaboratively plan on many of our public lands and in cities and towns across the country. Following the lead of a number of States, stakeholders and the public, the National Ocean Policy applies this concept of improved decisions through coordination and planning to our ocean in order to achieve many of the same benefits.

### Conclusion

Successful implementation of the National Ocean Policy will help ensure healthy and productive ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources, including clean beaches and abundant seafood and wildlife. This will benefit coastal communities and our Nation by providing for a robust economy, sustainable job growth, and recreational opportunities. The National Ocean Policy will help avoid conflicts and ensure that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the wellbeing, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning and I look forward to your questions.