



News Release

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BUSH ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$140 MILLION MORE FOR CLEAN OCEAN PRIORITIES

WASHINGTON, DC –The Bush Administration today announced major budget increases totaling more than \$140 million to support coastal and marine conservation efforts in Fiscal Year 2008, and released the administration’s Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality James L. Connaughton, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Dr. John H. Marburger, III, and Director of the National Science Foundation Dr. Arden Bement made the announcements today at the White House.

“President Bush has a bold vision to clean up our oceans and coastlines,” Gutierrez said. “Whether for fishing, tourism, recreation or trade, oceans are a treasured part of America’s life and economy. With these additional resources and the new Ocean Research Priorities Plan, NOAA will be able to expand its research and implement plans to better protect our oceans, fish and ecosystems.”

“Our oceans are so vast that for most of history we thought of them as inexhaustible and indestructible,” Kempthorne said. “Only in recent decades have we come to realize we must take care of them as we would take care of any precious natural resource. I am pleased that President Bush is making a major commitment in the 2008 budget to continuing the work we have begun under the Oceans Action Plan. We have made great progress and I trust we will continue to make great progress.”

“As a conservationist and recreational fisherman, the President is personally committed to making our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier and more productive,” said Connaughton. “Last year was a banner year for ocean conservation, but we will not rest on our laurels. This ocean budget initiative is a testament of the President’s strong

commitment to continue to work with our partners to meet the challenges that face our nation's precious natural resources.”

"Given the important role oceans play in many aspects of American life, it is clear that good stewardship of our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes is a national priority. The Ocean Research Priorities and Implementation Plan has charted an ambitious course for advancing policy to preserve the health and productivity of these waters,” said Marburger.

“Stewardship of the planet and its oceans begins with a clear understanding of the seas, and science and education are the tools that can achieve it,” said Bement. “In partnership with the ocean community and other federal agencies, NSF is proud and excited to support research, discovery and innovation to fulfill the vision of the Ocean Research Priorities Plan.”

The President’s Fiscal Year 2008 Budget requests more than \$140 million over the 2007 budget request level for high priority projects that will advance ocean science and research, protect and restore sensitive marine and coastal areas, ensure sustainable use of ocean resources and enhance domestic seafood supply through an environmentally sustainable offshore aquaculture industry.

Specifically, the President’s budget increases programs at the Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by \$123 million, including \$25 million for sustainable use of ocean resources, \$38 million for protection and restoration of marine and coastal areas and \$60 million for enhanced ocean science and research. It also includes \$20 million for the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Geological Survey to implement the Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy (ORPP). Of these funds, the Interior Department’s U.S. Geological Survey will be provided \$3 million for research, sea floor mapping, forecast models, and water quality monitoring in key coastal areas such as the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay.

The ORPP was developed to identify ocean research priorities for the next 10 years along with related infrastructure needs. Twenty-two research priorities have been identified under the overarching central themes of understanding and capability to forecast ocean processes and phenomena, scientific support for ecosystem-based management, and targeted deployment of an ocean observing system.

The officials also released a progress report, “The U.S. Ocean Action Plan and Implementation Update,” and cited significant accomplishments from the Ocean Action Plan including:

- The designation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument by President Bush on June 15, 2006. In December, Secretaries Gutierrez and Kempthorne visited Hawaii to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with Governor Lingle for managing and protecting the Monument.

- The passage in late 2006 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act that governs fishery management activities in federal waters and established a firm deadline to end overfishing. It also increases use of market-based management tools, creates a national saltwater angler registry, and emphasizes an ecosystem approach to management.
- The development of a forecasting system for harmful algal blooms.
- Efforts to improve federal-regional planning including the formation of the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Both are examples of cooperative partnerships under the leadership of states, localities and tribes as well as international agencies from Canada and Mexico called for in the OAP.

The President issued the Ocean Action Plan in December of 2004 to coordinate and guide federal ocean policy. The plan set as goals enhancing ocean leadership and coordination; advancing our understanding of oceans, coasts, and great lakes; enhancing the use and conservation of our ocean, coastal and great lakes resources; managing coasts and their watersheds; supporting maritime transportation; and advancing international ocean science and policy.

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