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COMMERCE SECRETARY APPOINTS FIVE NEW MEMBERS, REAPPOINTS 22 TO MARINE PROTECTED AREAS FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Commerce secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, has appointed five new members to the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee. The agency has also reappointed 22 members to two- and four-year terms. Three vacancies remain to be filled on the advisory panel.

Required as part of Presidential Executive Order 13158 dealing with marine protected areas (MPAs), the 30-person committee represents a broad stakeholder community, including scientists, academia, commercial and recreational fishermen, energy and minerals industry, state and tribal resource managers, and environmentalists. In addition, nine representatives of federal agencies serve on the committee in a non-voting capacity.

The advisory committee's duties include providing advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on implementation of aspects of the MPA executive order. In June 2005, after deliberating for two years, the committee delivered its first set of recommendations on developing a national system of MPAs. The committee met earlier this week in Corpus Christi, Texas.

"We are pleased by the consensus-building efforts that the committee has pursued, and look forward to continued strong leadership as the members begin new terms," Secretary Gutierrez said. "These individuals play a crucial role in helping us determine how best to balance marine conservation needs with commercial and recreational interests for present and future generations."

The committee is supported by the National Marine Protected Areas Center, established within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in cooperation with the Department of the Interior. The center is charged with developing a framework for a national system of MPAs and providing federal, state, territorial, and tribal agencies with the information, technologies, training, and strategies to support a national MPA system for the nation's oceans, coasts, and the Great Lakes.

The following members have been reappointed to a four-year term on the MPA Federal Advisory Committee:

- David Benton, Marine Conservation Alliance; Juneau, Alaska
- Daniel Bromley, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Anthony Chatwin, The Nature Conservancy; Bethesda, Md.
- Mark Hixon, Oregon State University, Corvallis
- George Lapointe, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Augusta
- John Ogden, Florida Institute of Oceanography, St. Petersburg
- Terry O'Halloran, Tourism Business Solutions LLC; Kalaheo, Hawaii
- Walter Pereyra, commercial fishing; Seattle, Wash.
- Gilbert Radonski, sport fishing; Cape Carteret, N.C.
- James Ray, Oceanic Environmental Solutions Inc.; Spring, Texas
- Robert Zales II, sport fishing; Panama City, Fla.

The following members have been reappointed to a two-year term on the MPA Federal Advisory Committee:

- Tundi Agardy, Sound Seas; Bethesda, Md.
- Robert Bendick, Jr., The Nature Conservancy; Altamonte Springs, Fla.
- Michael Cruickshank, Marine Minerals, Technology Center Associates; Honolulu, Hawaii
- Eric Gilman, Blue Ocean Institute; Honolulu, Hawaii
- Bonnie McCay, Rutgers University; New Brunswick, N.J.
- Steven Murray, California State University, Fullerton
- Lelei Peau, Department of Commerce of American Samoa, Pago Pago
- Max Peterson, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Washington, D.C.
- Daniel Suman, University of Miami; Miami, Fla.
- H. Kay Williams, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Vancleave, Miss.
- John Halsey, Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries; Lansing, Mich.

The following representatives have been newly appointed:

- Charles Beeker, Indiana University, Bloomington (appointed through October 2009)
- Ellen Goethel, commercial fishing, New Hampshire (appointed through October 2007)
- Dennis Heinemann, The Ocean Conservancy, Washington, D.C. (appointed through October 2009)
- Andrew Sansom, River Systems Institute, Texas State University, San Marcos (appointed through October 2007)
- Jim Woods, Makah tribe, Neah Bay, Wash. (appointed through October 2009)

Organizations and individuals nominate candidates to serve on the advisory committee. A panel of experts from the departments of Commerce and the Interior select candidates, seeking to ensure that the committee's membership represents the broad spectrum of parties interested in MPAs across the nation.

The federal advisory committee forms subcommittees and invites diverse MPA stakeholder groups to address the committee on issues of concern. Committee meetings are held in various regions across the country to provide an opportunity for broad public comments. Transcripts, presentations, the committee's recommendations, and other documents from past meetings are available on www.mpa.gov, which is operated by the National Marine Protected Areas Center.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, 61 countries and the European Commission to develop a global network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

--- 30 ---

For more information online:

U.S. Department of Commerce - <http://www.doc.gov>

NOAA - <http://www.noaa.gov>

U.S. Department of the Interior - <http://www.doi.gov>

National Marine Protected Areas Center - <http://www.mpa.gov>