

U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY



[Note: The following document contains the broad ocean policy elements that the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy has identified as essential to a sound national ocean policy. This document serves as a framework for the Commission's inquiry and eventual development of recommendations that it will include in its final report. It should be emphasized that this document is a work in progress and part of an iterative process that will be constantly revisited as the Commission's work progresses.]

DRAFT

Developing a National Policy for Our Ocean Future

The Federal government is responsible to this and succeeding generations of U.S. citizens and residents for leadership in the administration of approximately 3.4 million square miles of ocean area and over 95,000 miles of coastline.

When the U.S. Congress passed and the President signed the Oceans Act of 2000, the nation's leaders articulated the importance of a healthy and productive ocean and coastal domain to the nation and the world. To address issues related to national ocean policy, Congress established the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The Commission is charged with investigating a range of ocean related issues and recommending a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy.

Congress and the President have stated *why* we need a comprehensive national ocean policy. It is the Commission's job to state *what* that policy should be and *how* to make it happen.

The Commission believes harmonized U.S. ocean and coastal policies should guide the public and private sectors and should promote a stewardship ethic. These policies and their related practices should strive to balance responsible development with sound conservation of ocean and coastal resources and explicitly recognize the interaction with atmospheric and watershed conditions.

In addition, the Commission believes the following elements are essential to developing a robust national ocean policy.

1. **A coordinated and comprehensive framework** that defines the appropriate role for all levels of government, the private sector, and citizens and residents in managing ocean and coastal resources.
2. **Sustainable use** of ocean resources in a manner that adequately protects fragile and unique coastal and marine areas.
3. **Public education in marine affairs and sciences** that raises awareness of the nation's wealth of coastal and ocean resources, and the connection between the atmosphere and the ocean, and also identifies the potential benefits and costs inherent in their use, and explains the role of governments and citizens and residents as ocean stewards.
4. **Technical knowledge of the marine realm**, including information on the interaction between the atmosphere and the ocean, on ocean features, dynamics, and ecosystems that is used to improve sustainable and beneficial use and conservation of marine resources.
5. **Ongoing monitoring** that leads to adaptive management of our ocean resources.
6. **Public safety and security** from natural and man-made hazards and threats along the nation's coasts and in U.S. ports, harbors, and waterways.
7. **Ample opportunities for people** to enjoy and benefit from the marine environment, including its natural amenities, aesthetic beauty, and historic and cultural resources, for inspiration and renewal as well as for recreational and educational pursuits.
8. **U.S. commitment to global marine affairs** through development and exchange of expertise with other nations with regard to ocean and coastal governance, stewardship, education, science, and exploration.
9. **Investment** in ocean-based commerce, marine technology development, resource protection and use, environmental restoration, recreation, and expansion of marine knowledge by both the public and private sectors for the benefit of the nation and the world.
10. **A well-designed management system** that ensures the oversight and sustained attention to the implementation of all the elements of the national ocean policy.