

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797

JOSEPH E. KERNAN
GOVERNOR

June 2, 2004

Admiral James D. Watkins, Ret.
Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
1120 20th, NW
Suite 200 North
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Admiral Watkins:

Indiana welcomes the opportunity to comment on the April 20, 2004 *Preliminary Report of the U. S. Commission on Ocean Policy (Preliminary Report)*. The economy of our nation and the quality of life of each individual citizen are dependent upon reasoned management and protection of our important coastal regions. The Great Lakes, in particular, are our nation's largest freshwater source. They are a valuable shared resource, vital to our economy and our environment.

Indiana supports the general policy recommendations set forth in the *Preliminary Report*. These elements offer a common-sense approach that can raise the profile of coastal issues and help apply improved coordination at the federal, state, and local levels. Your Commission's attention to the issues of integrated governance of federal agencies, better science for decision making, and education of governments and the public concerning the importance of coastal resources is well founded.

Careful reading of the *Preliminary Report* suggests that the Great Lakes are included within the ocean policy set forth by the Commission. I urge you to be explicit and unequivocal in your inclusion of the Great Lakes in your recommendations. This is necessary to properly address the needs of all of our coastal resources. Rather than a National Ocean Council, please consider the need for a Council that explicitly references the importance of Great Lakes protection. This expanded reference offers parity of treatment for the important coastal areas of the Great Lakes as well as the Oceans. Regional participation is essential and should be recognized as an element of governance.

A concern is that existing state and local programs, already directed to coastal needs, may not be adequately considered while implementing specific federal governance recommendations of the *Preliminary Report*. Reconfiguration of federal agency responsibilities should consider how programs are being implemented within the states. Where feasible, changes at the federal level should be implemented to support and foster existing programs on the state and local level.

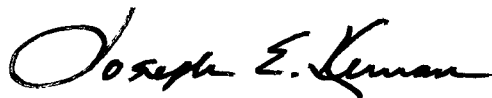
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The application of "strong science for wise decisions" is a sound principle. The principle should not, however, become a mechanism for delay. Water contamination arises from a variety of sources and the effects of this pollution are experienced well beyond our immediate coastal areas. Similarly, invasive aquatic species are already impacting the aesthetic and economic qualities of the Great Lakes. In these examples and others, protective measures may be required while research is in progress. Ultimately, forms of protection may be modified as science advances.

We also support your recommendations for increased federal support of oceans and Great Lakes research. Given these bodies of water offer enormous untapped potential to sustain human life, such research deserves additional public investment, which we believe should be equitably distributed to advance the discovery and recovery of our Great Lakes.

Indiana looks forward to participation as a full partner in this important initiative. Coordinated management of our precious coastal resources is of vital interest to all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph E. Kernan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

Joseph E. Kernan

JEK/CD/nlm