

U.S. COMMISSION ON
OCEAN POLICY



PRELIMINARY REPORT
OF THE U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY

GOVERNORS' DRAFT
APRIL 2004

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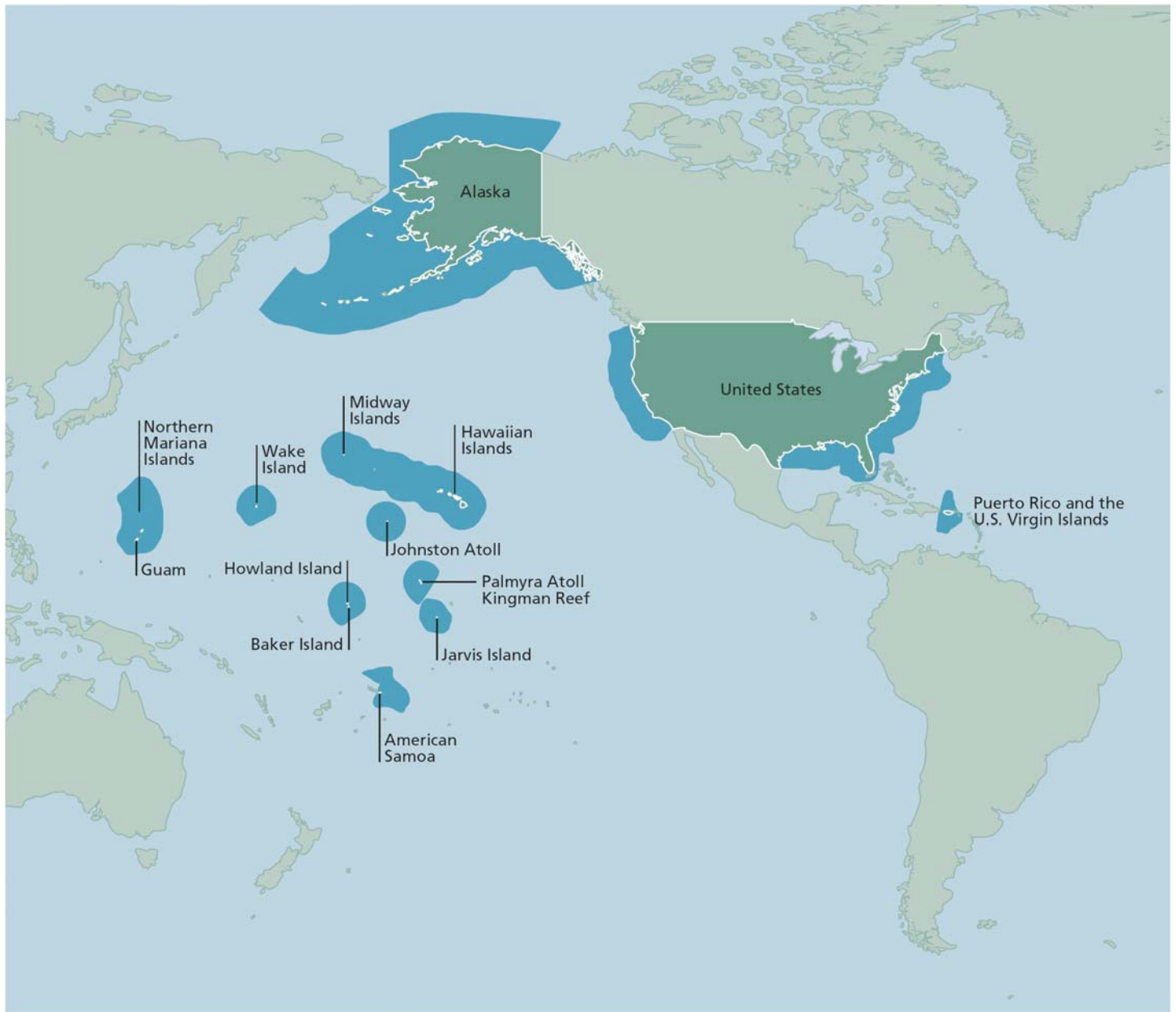
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GOVERNORS' DRAFT, WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 2004

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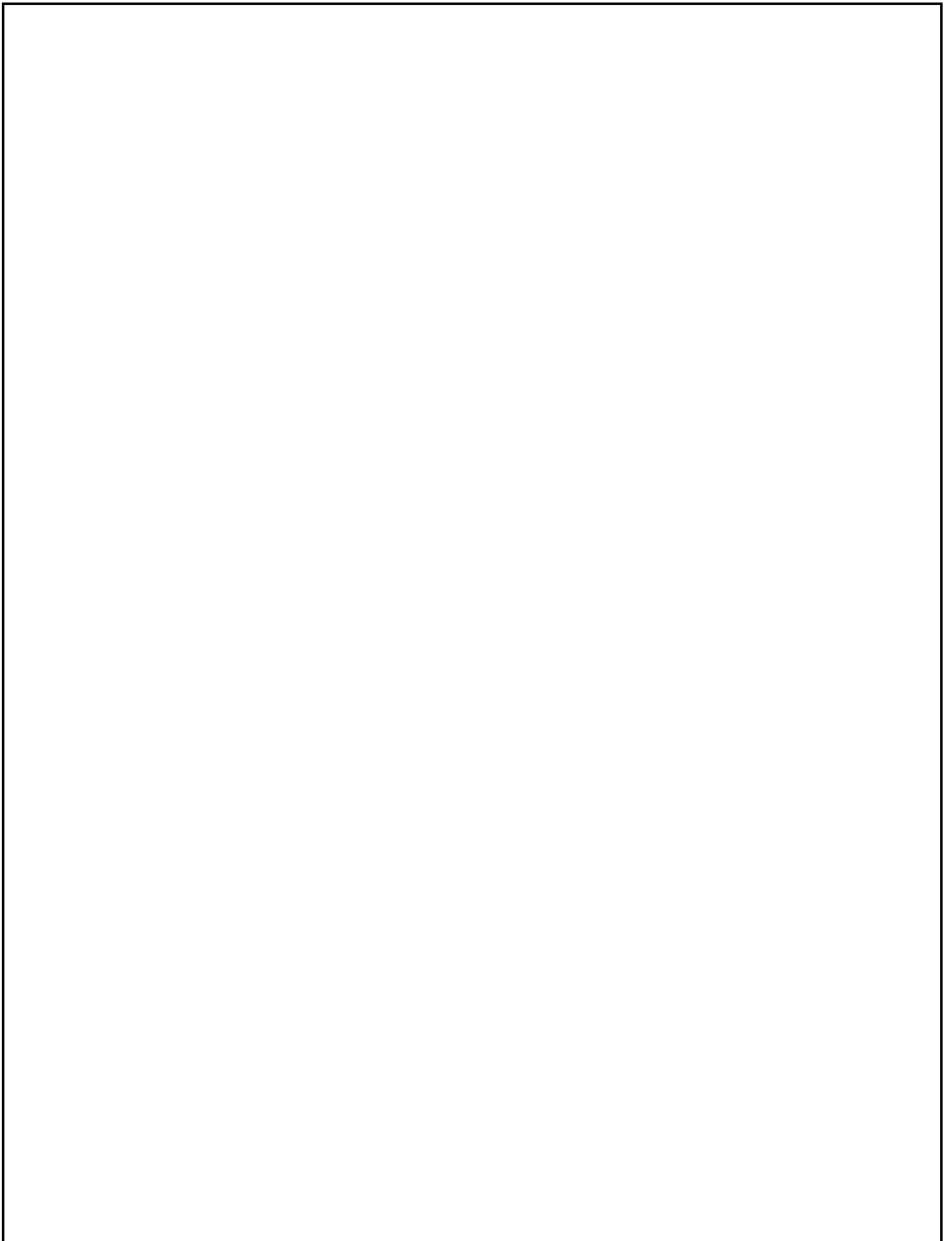
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The United States Is an Ocean Nation

The U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extends 200 nautical miles offshore, encompassing diverse ecosystems and vast natural resources, such as fisheries and energy and other mineral resources. The U.S. EEZ is the largest in the world, spanning over 13,000 miles of coastline and containing 3.4 million square nautical miles of ocean, which is larger than the combined land area of the fifty states. (A square nautical mile is equal to 1.3 square miles.)



U.S. COMMISSION ON
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April 2004

Dear Reader:

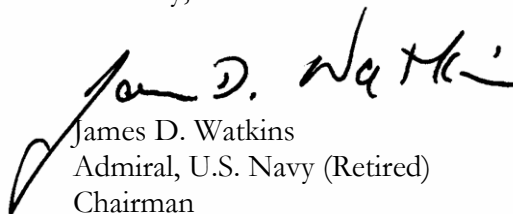
As mandated by the *Oceans Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-256), the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy is pleased to present this Preliminary Report for review by the nation's Governors and interested stakeholders. Detailed instructions for submitting comments, including the comment deadline, can be found on our Web site, www.oceancommission.gov. Higher quality, full-color versions of the graphics (tables, charts, and maps) can also be viewed at that site.

Beginning in September 2001, the Commission convened a series of fifteen public meetings and seventeen site visits around the country. The Commission members learned firsthand about the most pressing issues facing the nation regarding the use and stewardship of ocean and coastal resources. This Preliminary Report builds on information presented at those meetings, combined with the latest scientific and technical information on oceans and coasts, and inputs from hundreds of experts. This draft remains a work in progress. Nevertheless, the findings and policy recommendations included here reflect a consensus of the Commission members, and what they believe to be a balanced approach to protecting the marine environment while sustaining the vital role oceans and coasts play in our lives and national economy.

The release of this Preliminary Report is the first stage in our process. After careful consideration of comments received from the Governors and others, the Commission will deliver its final report to the President and Congress.

We welcome your thoughts and comments on this document. We believe the Commission's report will be essential in improving the nation's ocean and coastal policies and guaranteeing sustainable use of the world's oceans for the 21st century.

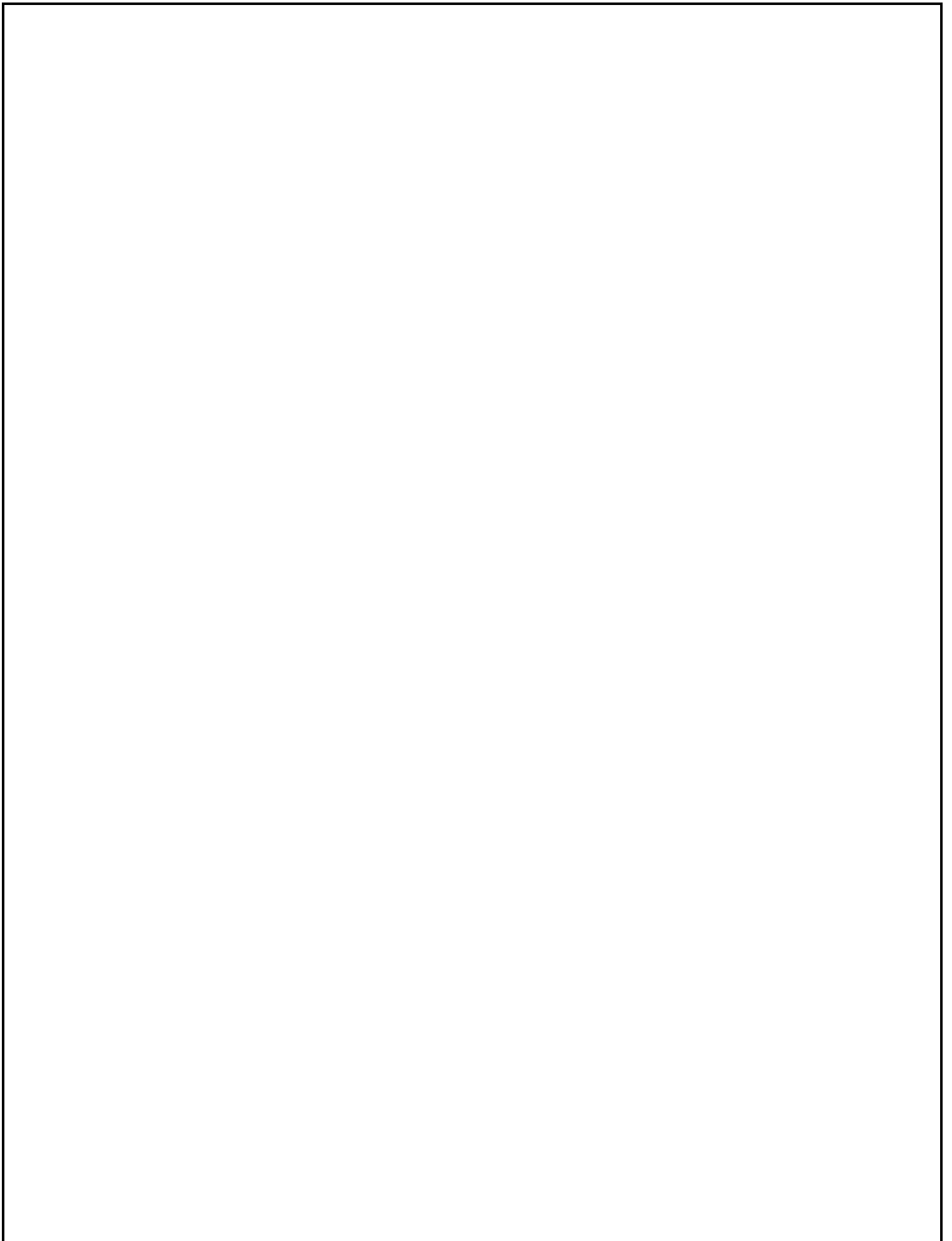
Sincerely,



James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman

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The Commission is deeply grateful to the many individuals who provided testimony, technical input, insightful comments, and many other forms of assistance in completing this momentous task.

A complete record of testimony presented to the Commission can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 and on the Commission's Web site (www.oceancommission.gov).

The many other contributors will be listed and acknowledged in the Commission's final report.