

U.S. COMMISSION ON
OCEAN POLICY



**Summary of Governor and Tribal Leader Comments
on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's Preliminary Report
July 22, 2004**

The governors' and tribal leaders' comments on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's Preliminary Report are generally favorable. Most of the 42 respondents (37 governors and 5 tribal leaders) highlight the report's comprehensive treatment of ocean and coastal issues, the economic importance of oceans and coasts, and the need to take immediate action to protect and enhance the health of these resources. Their primary concerns relate to funding issues; the participation of states, territories, and tribes in national policy development; and the need for flexibility in the implementation of such policies. Below is a general summary of comments submitted by the governors. The complete text of the governors' comments on the Preliminary Report is available online at: www.oceancommission.gov.

- Most emphasize that oceans, coasts and Great Lakes make significant contributions to their state's economy.
- Virtually all support reauthorizing and strengthening the CZMA.
- Many agree that the health of our coasts and oceans are threatened, that there is an immediate need for greater attention and resources to address the activities causing these problems, and that a transition toward ecosystem-based management is the appropriate approach.
- Many identify the lack of integration and coordination among federal agencies as a major problem. However, some express concern that the focus of the Preliminary Report is too much on federal actions. They emphasize the need for greater recognition of state responsibilities for the management of coastal resources and increasing the role of states in the development and implementation of a national ocean policy.
- Most support the creation of a National Ocean Council to improve the coordination of federal activities and a number request state representation on the Council. However, some express concern about establishing an additional layer of bureaucracy.
- Many indicate the need to focus on strengthening and fully funding existing programs while limiting the establishment of new programs or initiatives.
- Many support the establishment of regional ocean councils for improving regional coordination while emphasizing the need for flexibility in their development and operation.
- There is strong support for the development of regional ocean information programs that focus on providing useful information and products to regional, state and local

decision makers. Some indicate a need to strengthen the relationship between the regional information programs and the regional ocean councils.

- Many support the development of a comprehensive management regime in federal offshore waters with greater state involvement in the decision making process for activities that occur in federal waters adjacent to individual states.
- Most favor the concept of an Ocean Policy Trust Fund and increased funding for ocean and coastal resource science, education and management. However, a number of governors indicated that the Fund should avoid offering incentives for increased offshore activities.
- Most support the creation of an Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) while indicating the system should incorporate existing regional, state and local coastal observing and monitoring systems.
- Many express the importance of increased attention and resources for marine education and public outreach activities to facilitate the development of a national ocean stewardship ethic, better science literacy, and a more competitive workforce.
- Several indicate that not enough attention is given to climate change and its impacts on marine resources, processes and coastal and island communities.
- Coastal Tribal Leaders stress the importance of acknowledging the need for increased coastal tribal participation in the development and implementation of ocean and coastal policies.
- Most oppose the establishment of any form of disincentive or penalty as a mechanism for ensuring implementation of and compliance with federal program requirements.
- Most recognize nonpoint source pollution as a major problem facing the nation; however, there is not a consensus regarding the recommendation to merge the Coastal Zone Management Act Section 6217 program into the Clean Water Act Section 319 nonpoint program. In addition, most strongly disagree with the use of disincentives or penalties to facilitate the implementation of state nonpoint programs.
- There are also a number of comments related to Commission recommendations on the management of living marine resources. For example:
 - Many support the use of Dedicated Access Privileges (IFQs) as a valid management tool, but emphasize that these programs should be flexible and regionally-led.
 - Most support expanded, regionally-based cooperative fisheries research programs.
 - Some object to additional guidelines for governors when nominating individuals to the Regional Fishery Management Councils (RFMC).
 - Some oppose increasing the authority and power of the RFMC's Scientific and Statistical Committee for setting allowable biological catch levels.
 - Some oppose the establishment of "default" measures when an RFMC fails to act in a timely manner.
 - Some disagree with requiring interstate fisheries management commissions to follow the standards of the federal Magnuson-Stevens Act.
 - A number of island states and territories object to placing deepwater corals under the jurisdiction of the Coral Reef Task Force.

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