

U.S. Ocean Action Plan

**The Bush Administration's
Response to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**

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INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the importance of the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes to the United States, in the Oceans Act of 2000, Congress established the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (Commission). The Commission began work in September 2001, and pursuant to its legislative mandate, completed a thorough and expansive report, “An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century,” on September 20, 2004. The Nation owes the dedicated commissioners, and particularly the chair of the Commission, retired Admiral James Watkins, a debt of gratitude for their labor. Similarly, the U.S. Congress has demonstrated dedication and commitment to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues by conducting various oversight hearings and acting on important legislation.

The United States is geographically defined by ocean coasts, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean. The United States is endowed with the largest Exclusive Economic Zone and with the greatest system of fresh water lakes in the world. As a nation, we have benefited enormously from our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. More than half of the U.S. population – 141 million people -- live within 50 miles of the coast. We expect that by 2025, approximately 75 percent of Americans will live in coastal areas. More than 95 percent of U.S. overseas trade by volume, and 37 percent by value, is waterborne – contributing \$740 billion annually to the gross domestic product while employing 13 million Americans. Coastal and marine waters support over 28 million jobs, while providing tourist destinations for 189 million Americans each year. U.S. consumers spend over \$55 billion for fishery products annually. The Outer Continental Shelf generates 30 percent of the oil and 23 percent of the natural gas produced in this country. Oceans are the home of the majority of the world’s living organisms, and over the past two decades, thousands of marine biochemicals have been identified. One such compound, found in the blood of horseshoe crabs, is being used to test intravenous drugs for bacteria. The oceans are a critical component of the Earth's climate system, yet the exact role they play is not yet well known.

The Bush Administration is focused on achieving meaningful results – making our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier, and more productive. We see a key challenge in developing management strategies that ensure continued conservation of coastal and marine habitats and living resources while at the same time ensuring that the American public enjoys and benefits from those same resources. To advance the next generation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy, we will employ the best science and data to inform our decision-making. The Administration will continue to work towards an ecosystem-based approach in making decisions related to water, land, and resource management in ways that do not erode local and State authorities and are flexible to address local conditions. Our policies will encourage innovation and employ economic incentives over mandates where possible and will establish strong partnerships between Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, the private sector, international partners, and other interests. This Administration strongly values the importance of local involvement and these partnerships are absolutely essential in managing and protecting our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources.

Our response, “U.S. Ocean Action Plan,” reflects these values and goals and outlines the fundamental components, both in response to the Oceans Commission report as well as recent action, which together provide the foundation to advance the next generation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy. Taken in its entirety, this response engenders responsible use and stewardship of ocean and coastal resources for

the benefit of all Americans. We encourage readers to visit ocean.ceq.gov for a comprehensive listing of activities that benefit our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

U.S. Ocean Action Plan Highlights

Our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes sustain an abundance of natural wonders while contributing significantly to the economy, supporting numerous beneficial uses such as food production, development of energy and mineral resources, research and education, recreation and tourism, transportation of goods and people, and the discovery of novel medicines. Along with numerous State, Tribal, and local programs our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are governed by over 20 Federal agencies administering over 140 Federal laws. These activities would benefit substantially from more systematic collaboration and better integration of effort.

President Bush has established by Executive Order a Cabinet-level "Committee on Ocean Policy" to coordinate the activities of executive branch departments and agencies regarding ocean-related matters in an integrated and effective manner to advance the environmental and economic interests of present and future generations of Americans. The President further directs the Executive branch agencies to facilitate, as appropriate, coordination and consultation regarding ocean-related matters among Federal, State, Tribal, local governments, the private sector, foreign governments, and international organizations.

The Commission's final report highlights the progress that has been made while also identifying key recommendations for advancing ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy. In response to the Commission's recommendations, the Bush Administration has developed the "U.S. Ocean Action Plan." The intent of the Administration's response is to identify immediate, short-term actions that provide direction for ocean policy and highlight and also outline additional long-term actions for the future. Selected highlights are listed below, followed by a more complete discussion of the actions.

Immediate and Long-term Action Highlights

- **Establish a New Cabinet-Level Committee on Ocean Policy.** The Committee will convene its first meeting early in 2005. The Committee will develop an 18-month work plan to address a number of the Commission's recommendations, including further actions on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues that address governance principles, filling gaps in legislative authority, and streamlining unnecessary overlapping authorities. Where appropriate the Committee will work with the States, Tribes, local officials, and others on these actions.
- **Work with Regional Fisheries Councils to Promote Greater use of Market-based System for Fisheries Management.** The Administration continues to support and will further promote the use, as appropriate, of dedicated access privileges, such as individual fishing quotas (IFQs), for improving fisheries management. An IFQ is a management program that provides individual fishermen an exclusive, market-based share of the annual harvest quota (generally a percent share).
- **Build a Global Earth Observation Network, Including Integrated Ocean Observation.** The United States is playing a lead role in bringing the international community together to develop an integrated, comprehensive, and sustained global earth observing system of systems that includes

a substantial ocean component, known as the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS). The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System will be a major element of GOOS.

- **Develop an Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.** The NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology will develop an Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy by December 31, 2006. The Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy will seek enhanced collaboration, coordination, cooperation, and synergies, and will identify gaps and deficiencies along with related infrastructure needs.
- **Support Accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.** As a matter of national security, economic self-interest, and international leadership, the Bush Administration is strongly committed to U.S. accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Administration urges Congress to provide advice and consent to this treaty as early as possible in the 109th Congress.
- **Implement Coral Reef Local Action Strategies.** The President will request \$2.7 million for Coral Reef Local Action Strategies in his FY 2006 budget. The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and the members of its seven jurisdictions (Florida, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands) have developed coral reef local action strategies to address key threats to coral reefs in their jurisdictions. This effort is a significant step forward in advancing the goal of cooperative conservation between the Federal, State, Territorial and Commonwealth governments.
- **Support a Regional Partnership in the Gulf of Mexico.** Administration officials will meet with the appropriate regional representatives in the spring of 2005 to explore partnership opportunities for key priorities in the Gulf of Mexico. There is a particular emphasis on public health, specifically on water quality for shellfish beds and beaches in the Gulf of Mexico and the use of a regional ocean observing system to provide a real-time alert system for beach and shellfish bed closings.
- **Seek Passage of NOAA Organic Act Establishing NOAA within Department of Commerce.** Consistent with the Commission's recommendations, the Administration drafted a NOAA Organic Act (H.R. 4607 was introduced at the Administration's request on June 17, 2004), which would establish NOAA within the Department of Commerce. The Administration will seek its passage during the 109th Congress.
- **Implement the Administration's National Freight Action Agenda.** The President directs the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with marine transportation stakeholders, Federal agencies, and State and local governments, to implement the Administration's National Freight Action Agenda. The Administration's new National Freight Action Agenda has identified seven high-priority freight initiatives to ensure that the Nation has a safe, reliable, and efficient freight transportation system that supports economic growth and international competitiveness.

ENHANCING OCEAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Seek Passage of NOAA Organic Act Establishing NOAA within the Department of Commerce
- Establish a New Cabinet-Level Committee on Ocean Policy
- Support Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaboration
- Support State and Federal Partnerships in the Gulf of Mexico
- Advance Ocean Stewardship through Implementation of Cooperative Conservation Executive Order

At the Federal level, eleven of the fifteen cabinet-level departments and four independent agencies play important roles in the development of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy. These agencies interact with one another and with State, Territorial, Tribal and local authorities and others to find the balance between conservation of ocean resources and ensuring that the American public enjoys the multiple benefits of its resources.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recommends a phased-in approach to enhancing ocean leadership and coordination. The initial phase as recommended includes: 1) codifying the existence of NOAA within the Department of Commerce by passage of an organic act; 2) establishing a cabinet-level Federal ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes coordinating entity; and 3) supporting voluntary regional collaboration. As a second step in the phased approach, all Federal agencies with ocean-related responsibilities should be reviewed and strengthened, and appropriate programs should be considered for consolidation. The Administration supports the need for enhanced coordination and strongly values the local input that is essential in managing and protecting our Nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources.

Consistent with the Commission's recommendations, the Administration believes that these activities would benefit from a more systematic collaboration and better integration of effort. To improve better coordination and integration of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes' policy, the Administration proposes the following Federal interagency coordinating structure while facilitating regional, State, and local participation.

Improving Federal Coordination and Governance

- **Seek Passage of NOAA Organic Act Establishing NOAA within the Department of Commerce.** Consistent with the Commission's recommendations the Administration drafted a NOAA Organic Act, and H.R. 4607 was introduced on June 17, 2004, at the Administration's request. The Administration will seek passage during the 109th Congress.
- **Establish a New Cabinet-Level Committee on Ocean Policy.** The President has signed an Executive Order establishing the Committee on Ocean Policy. The Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) will serve as Chairman of this Committee, which will consist of the

Secretaries of State, Defense, the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Commerce, Labor, Transportation, Energy, and Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the Director of the National Science Foundation, and the Chairman, Joint of the Chiefs of Staff; the Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs, Homeland Security, Domestic Policy, and Economic Policy; an employee of the United States designated by the Vice President; and such other officers or employees of the United States as the chairman of the Committee may from time to time designate.

Functions: The Committee on Ocean Policy will advise the President and, as appropriate, agency heads on the establishment or implementation of policies concerning certain ocean-related matters. It would also facilitate, among other things: (1) development and implementation of common principles and goals for governmental activities on ocean-related matters; (2) use of science in the establishment of policy on ocean-related matters; and (3) collection, development, dissemination, and exchange of information on ocean-related matters. The Committee will develop an 18-month work plan to address a number of the Commission's recommendations, including further actions on ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues relating to governance principles, filling gaps in legislative authority, and streamlining unnecessary overlapping authorities. Where appropriate, the Committee will work with States, Tribes, local officials, and others on these actions.

To support its work, the Committee on Ocean Policy will initially establish the following subsidiary bodies and coordinate with existing structures (figure 1).

- **Establish New Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration.** Within the Committee on Ocean Policy, an Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration will be established and Co-Chaired by the OSTP Associate Director for Science and the CEQ Deputy Director or Chief of Staff, who will report directly to the Chair of the Committee on Ocean Policy. This Committee will incorporate the National Ocean Research Leadership Council's current mandate within its broader mandate that includes ocean resource management. The members will consist of Under/Assistant Secretaries or their equivalents from the Executive branch agencies and departments of the Committee on Ocean Policy.

Functions: The work of the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration will include: 1) coordinate and integrate activities of ocean-related Federal agencies and provide incentives for meeting national goals; 2) identify statutory and regulatory redundancies or omissions and develop strategies to resolve conflicts, fill gaps, and address new emerging ocean issues for national and regional benefits; 3) guide the effective use of science in ocean policy and ensure the availability of data and information for decision making at national and regional levels; 4) develop and support partnerships among government agencies and nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, academia, and the public; 5) coordinate education and outreach efforts by Federal ocean and coastal agencies; 6) periodically assess the state of the Nation's oceans and coasts to measure the achievement of national ocean goals and 8) make recommendations to the Committee on

Ocean Policy on developing and carrying out national ocean policy, including domestic implementation of international ocean agreements.

- **Establish New Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources.**¹ The Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources will be co-chaired by the Associate Director for CEQ and an agency representative and report directly to the Co-chairs of the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration. The members consists of a Deputy Assistant Secretary or appropriate representative from the Executive branch agencies and departments of the Committee on Ocean Policy.

Functions: The Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources will 1) facilitate and coordinate the work of existing ocean and coastal interagency groups focused on the management of living and nonliving marine resources; 2) recommend the creation of new topical task forces as needed; 3) coordinate with government-wide environmental and natural resource efforts that have important ocean components; 4) identify opportunities for improvements in the application of science for ecosystem-based management of ocean resources; 5) identify priority research needs that can enhance management capabilities; 6) facilitate use of ocean science and technology, including ocean observations, in the implementation of ocean and coastal management and policies; 7) recommend assessments and analyses of Federal ocean resource management initiatives; 8) identify opportunities and articulate priorities for enhancing ocean education, outreach, and capacity building; and 9) identify opportunities for the promotion of international collaboration in ocean resource management.

- **NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology.** The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) established a Joint Subcommittee on Oceans in 2003. This group, with its name altered to include science and technology, will continue to report to the NSTC Committee on Science and the Committee on Earth and Natural Resources, now being co-chaired by OSTP and agency representatives, and will report directly to the Co-chairs of the new Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration. The Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology shall adhere to the rules and regulations of the NSTC. The group consists of Deputy Assistant Secretaries or appropriate representatives from the Executive branch agencies and departments of the Committee on Ocean Policy.

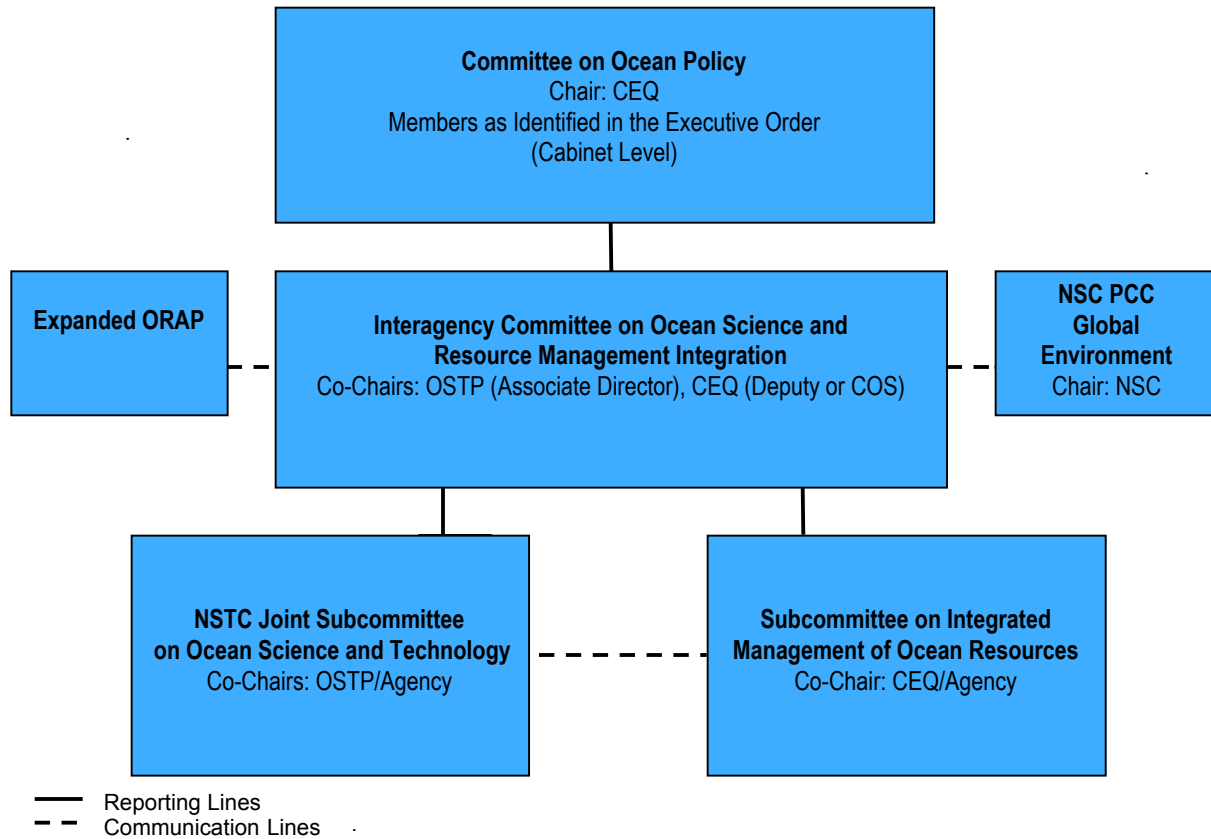
Functions: The NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology will 1) identify national ocean science and technology priorities; 2) facilitate coordination of disciplinary and interdisciplinary ocean research, ocean technology and infrastructure development, and national ocean observation programs; 3) facilitate expansion of knowledge about the oceans and their interactions with other components of the Earth system, including the atmosphere, land, and living resources, and about the relationship between oceans and society; 4) facilitate the application of knowledge for prediction and forecasting of ocean phenomena; 5) provide advice on science and technology for ecosystem-based management and stewardship of resources; 6) facilitate use of ocean science and technology in the development of coastal and

¹ As release on December 17, 2005, this interagency group was named “The Interagency Working Group on Ocean Resource Management.” The name has been change to the “Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources.”

marine policies; 7) recommend scientific and technical assessments and analyses of Federal ocean science and technology initiatives; 8) identify opportunities and articulate priorities for enhancing ocean education, outreach, and capacity building; 9) identify opportunities for the promotion of international collaboration in ocean science and technology; and 10) facilitate efficient transition of research to operations.

- **Ocean Research Advisory Panel.** The Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP) was mandated by Congress with the establishment of the 1997 National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) and functions under the auspices of the 1972 Federal Advisory Committee Act. ORAP consists of 10-18 members, representing the National Academies, academic oceanographic research institutions, ocean policy organizations, state governments, ocean industry, educators, and others. An expanded version of the existing ORAP, including ocean resource management, would provide independent advice and guidance to the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration.
- **National Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee.** In February 2001, under National Security Presidential Directive-1 (NSPD-1), the Administration established several Policy Coordinating Committees (PCCs) within the National Security Council (NSC) to serve as the primary venues for interagency coordination on national security policy. The “Global Environment” PCC was one of the PCCs that was established. In May 2001, the Administration re-established the Subcommittee on Oceans Policy (Oceans Sub-PCC) as a subgroup of the Global Environment PCC, creating a forum for interagency coordination on international oceans issues. Customarily, the Sub-PCC identifies international oceans issues of interest to the United States, and then creates issue-specific interagency working groups to identify U.S. interests and concerns, and formulate U.S. policy.

Figure 1 Coordinated Ocean Governance Structure



Support Regional Collaborations on Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes Policy in Partnership with Leadership of States, Localities, and Tribes

- **Support Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaboration.** On May 18, 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order creating the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and promoting regional collaboration to address nationally and internationally significant environmental and natural resource issues involving the Great Lakes. The Task Force, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, brings together ten Agency and Cabinet-level departments to provide strategic direction on Federal Great Lakes policies, priorities, and programs. The newly created Great Lakes Regional Collaboration convenes the Great Lakes States, local communities, Tribes, regional bodies, and other interests in the Great Lakes region in partnership with the Federal Task Force to design a coordinated, comprehensive strategy to restore and protect the Great Lakes. In December 2004, members of the President’s Cabinet, the Great Lakes governors, the Great Lakes congressional delegation, mayors, and Tribal leaders met to formalize this intergovernmental partnership and officially voice their support for a coordinated strategy to further protect and restore the Great Lakes. These intergovernmental groups will continue to work with our Canadian partners on critical scientific and policy issues in the Great Lakes region.

- **Support a Regional Partnership in the Gulf of Mexico.** The five Gulf of Mexico States have taken the lead in identifying key priorities for the Gulf of Mexico region. Among these priorities is a particular emphasis on public health, specifically on water quality for shellfish beds and beaches in the Gulf of Mexico and the use of a regional ocean observing system to provide a real-time alert system for beach and shellfish bed closings. Administration officials will meet with the appropriate regional representatives in the spring of 2005 to explore partnership opportunities.
- **Advance Ocean Stewardship through Implementation of Cooperative Conservation Executive Order.** On August 26, 2004, President Bush signed the Cooperative Conservation Executive Order, which directs the Federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource policies and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with States, local governments, Tribes, and individuals. Local involvement by those closest to the resource and their communities is critical to ensuring successful, effective, and long-lasting conservation results. The Committee on Ocean Policy will ensure that its work fully adheres to and utilizes the philosophy and tools of the President's direction on Cooperative Conservation.
- **Advance Regional Fisheries Management.** In the fall of 2004, twelve southeastern States, the U.S. Department of the Interior, NOAA, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalizing the creation of the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP). The SARP is developing regional efforts that move beyond traditional agency boundaries and stress joint resource responsibilities, rather than individual Federal and State responsibilities. The joint resource responsibilities that the SARP focuses on include public use, fishery mitigation, imperiled fish and aquatic species recovery, inter-jurisdictional fisheries, aquatic habitat conservation and aquatic nuisance species. The SARP is currently developing aquatic nuisance species management plans and strategies for the Southeast and an Aquatic Habitat Plan for the Southeast that could serve as a model for other regions and the nation. Currently, annual funding is provided by the Department of the Interior and NOAA to the SARP for meetings, workshops and facilitation contracts.

ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE OCEANS, COASTS, AND GREAT LAKES

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Develop an Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy
- Build a Global Earth Observation Network, Including Integrated Ocean Observations
- Develop and Deploy New State of the Art Research and Survey Vessels
- Create a National Water Quality Monitoring Network
- Coordinate Ocean and Coastal Mapping Activities
- Implement New Legislation on Oceans and Human Health, Harmful Algal Blooms, and Hypoxia
- Increase Ocean Education Coordination

Expanding Our Scientific Knowledge of Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes

The Bush Administration supports ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research including exploration for discovery, hypothesis-based science, infrastructure and technology development, data and information management, improvements of forecasting and data products, new observations and continuing research observations that have substantial societal benefits, such as saving lives and property. In the Federal ocean research sector, some agencies conduct basic and exploratory research, some conduct applied and mission-oriented research, and some agencies conduct both types of research. Since 1980, overall Federal support for scientific research in the life sciences, physical sciences, and environmental sciences including oceanography has increased dramatically from \$7.5 billion to \$26 billion annually. The Bush Administration firmly supports the principle that sound science and technology are needed to support effective management decisions.

- **Develop an Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.** In 2003, the President's National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Science and its Committee on Environment and Natural Resources created the Joint Subcommittee on Oceans (JSO) to advise and assist the Executive Branch with national ocean science and technology issues. The JSO, now renamed the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, will develop a Framework for an Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy by March 31, 2005, followed by a detailed plan and strategy by December 31, 2006. The Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy will seek enhanced collaboration, coordination, cooperation, and synergies, and will identify gaps and deficiencies along with related infrastructure needs. The Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy will be prepared in an open and transparent manner with advice from the ocean research community (government, academic, industry, and other non-government entities). The Implementation Strategy will identify how the various ocean science sectors (government, academic, industry, and other non-government entities) can and should be engaged, individually or through partnerships. The

Implementation Strategy will evaluate performance and research needs and identify areas of greatest priority and opportunity.

➤ **Build a Global Earth Observation Network, Including Integrated Oceans Observation**

An integrated earth observation system will benefit people around the world, particularly those in the Southern Hemisphere. Working together, our nations will develop and link observation technologies for tracking weather and climate changes in every corner of the world, which will allow us to make more informed decisions affecting our environment and economies. Our cooperation will enable us to develop the capability to predict droughts, prepare for weather emergencies, plan and protect crops, manage coastal areas and fisheries, and monitor air quality.

*President George W. Bush
July 31, 2001*

Statement on Earth Observation Summit

- Integrate U.S. Ocean Observing Efforts into the Global Earth Observing System of System. The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is a major U.S. contribution to the international Global Ocean Observing System, which is a substantial component of the intergovernmental Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). *The First Annual Integrated Ocean Observing Development Plan* is under preparation. The NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology will develop a strategy for integration and possible convergence of existing and future requisite coastal observing systems of the IOOS. The deployment and operation of IOOS will lead to:
 - improved understanding of climate change and its socio-economic consequences;
 - improved safety and efficiency of marine operations;
 - more effectively mitigating the effects of natural hazards such as tropical storms;
 - reduced public health risks;
 - protecting and restoring healthy marine ecosystems more effectively; and
 - improved ecosystem-based management of natural resources.
- Lead Development of International Capacity Building Effort. The United States will work with the Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS) program of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to help build the capacity in key developing countries for installing and operating tide-gauges, and for utilizing the resulting data – along with observations from complementary observing systems – to address societal needs. The United States will organize a two-week summer workshop to train participants on tide-gauge installation and operation from the selected countries, and will sponsor two representatives from each selected country, as well as professional instructors, to conduct the workshop.
- Monitor and Share Data on Ocean Currents in the Gulf of Mexico through New MMS Program. In November 2004, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) issued a Notice to Lessees and Operators (NLT) to establish and implement an ocean current monitoring and data-sharing program in the Gulf of Mexico. Under the NLT, deepwater oil and gas platform operators will collect ocean current data from deepwater drilling and production sites, and publish it on the

Internet. Initial feedback indicates that more than forty operating sites will collect data on a daily basis. MMS is also engaging industry in discussions on how this information may best be integrated into the IOOS currently under development.

- Share GIS Data Through New Corps of Engineers-NOAA Partnership. In November 2004, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA announced a partnership to advance the availability of Corps and NOAA GIS and associated technology and information to Corps' Districts and State coastal managers. This partnership will foster and facilitate participation in the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) and use of the data developed through this system by all interested parties.

➤ **Develop and Deploy New State of the Art Research and Survey Platforms.** The Commission identified acquiring additional oceanographic research and survey platforms, including satellites and surface and undersea vehicles, as essential components of a reinvigorated national oceanographic research plan. The Administration is currently developing a National Oceanographic Fleet Renewal Plan, that will define an interagency strategy for Federally-owned oceanographic ships operated by both Federal and academic organizations. The ship renewal plan will provide a vision for the future composition and size of the fleet to meet projected needs for research, for deployment and operation of observing systems, and for agency mission-oriented oceanographic operations. In addition, the Administration is enhancing the Federal government's oceanographic infrastructure in the following ways:

- Ocean Salinity from Space. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will launch the *Aquarius* satellite in 2008 to observe, for the first time, the sea surface salinity throughout the global ocean. *Aquarius*, in one day, will record more sea surface salinity data than has been measured since the dawn of oceanography 125 years ago. Recording annual variations of sea surface salinity from space for small and large regions, such as the Chesapeake Bay and the North Atlantic Ocean, represents a technological breakthrough that maintains U.S. leadership in satellites and oceanography.
- Replacing *Alvin*. The National Science Foundation is providing \$21.6 million in funding to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to construct the next generation human-occupied deep-sea submersible to replace *Alvin*. When this submersible is completed in 2008, it will, with a depth capability of 6500 meters, be able to descend to ninety-nine percent of the global ocean.
- A New Ocean Exploration Vessel for NOAA. In September 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed the FY2005 Department of Defense Appropriation Act, which directed the Navy to transfer the *USNS Capable* to NOAA as an exploration and research ship. The Navy will transfer \$18 million to NOAA to convert the ship for use as the Nation's first vessel solely dedicated to ocean exploration. This vessel will serve as a premier ocean research platform for NOAA to use to conduct critical deep sea missions on ocean floor mapping as well as biological and chemical research activities. The vessel will also be equipped for broadcasting real time transmissions of images and data collected during expeditions to scientists, teachers and, students.
- A New Ocean Survey Vessel for EPA. In 2004, the Navy transferred the *USNS Bold* to EPA. It will be converted to an ocean survey vessel in 2005 and initiate coastal and ocean surveys in mid-2005. EPA conducts oceanographic surveys to assess impacts of point and nonpoint sources of pollution on coastal and marine resources.

- Expanding the NOAA Fleet. The FY2005 appropriation contains \$34 million to complete funding for the construction of the third NOAA Fisheries Survey Vessel, and \$9.3 million to complete the funding for a newly designed hydrographic vessel.
- **Create a National Water Quality Monitoring Network.** The Committee on Ocean Policy will seek to develop a National Water Quality Monitoring Network. CEQ and NSTC are requesting the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI), through the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council), to provide advice and recommendations regarding the design and creation of a coordinated, comprehensive national water quality monitoring network. The network design will address and integrate watershed, coastal waters, and ocean monitoring based on common criteria and standards. In addition, it will provide information on water quality that, when interpreted with other information such as economic and land use data, will provide relevant scientific information to assist resource management and decision-making. The network design will identify the major overarching management questions that need to be addressed and the fundamental elements of this national monitoring network, emphasizing the “Federally funded backbone” of water quality networks and programs. It is expected that ACWI/Council would help to finalize this charge, and agree on an appropriate process to proceed. The tasks agreed to would be completed within one year (by January 2006) with at least one interim report to ACWI, CEQ, NSTC, in September 2005.
- **Coordinate Ocean and Coastal Mapping Activities.** Through the Committee on Ocean Policy, the NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology will lead the effort to coordinate Federal and Federally-supported mapping activities for the U.S. coastal and marine environment. Where appropriate, the NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology will engage non-Federal entities in their efforts. Activities should include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - development of an annual inventory of Federal, Federally-funded, and non-Federal governmental ocean and coastal mapping and charting programs, operations, and prioritized needs;
 - assessment and reporting on common and shared needs for development of coordinated programs;
 - coordinate and leverage resources and efforts across the Federal sector and with industry, academic, NGO, and non-Federal government entities;
 - set priorities for standards development and developing strategies for promulgation of standards for data acquisition, data, metadata, tools and products;
 - assessing and reporting on research and development needs for more effective development, delivery, and application of geospatial data, tools, products, and services; and
 - development of shared and standardized mechanisms for processing, archiving, and distribution of geospatial data, tools, products, and services.
- **Implement New Legislation on Oceans and Human Health, Harmful Algal Blooms, and Hypoxia.**
 - In December 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the Oceans and Human Health Act. This law authorizes a coordinated national research program to improve our understanding of the role of oceans in human health, ranging from the development of pharmaceuticals derived from marine organisms to providing the public with information on

ocean-related human health risks. The Administration will develop a strategic research plan for oceans and human health.

- In December 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Amendments Act of 2004. The Administration will reconvene the Interagency Task Force established under this law to coordinate research and actions on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia. The law also authorizes scientific assessments of prediction and mitigation techniques to reduce the impact of these destructive phenomena. In FY 2005, NOAA will employ its new authorities to assess and address harmful algal bloom threats in freshwater regions, such as the Great Lakes. In addition, States, Federal agencies, and Tribal representatives have launched a collaborative effort to revise the Hypoxia Action Plan of 2001, demonstrating a commitment to solve this critical problem.

- **Share U.S. Ocean Science Expertise Abroad.** The Bush Administration will form an interagency working group, reporting through the NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, and co-chaired by the National Science Foundation and the Navy, that will explore ways to foster participation of United States oceans scientists and technical experts in longer-term oceans programs abroad. Specifically, the interagency group will 1) determine the best means of consulting with private organizations such as academic institutions, industry, professional societies, and non-governmental advocacy groups; 2) seek input and support from the NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology; and 3) propose a plan for hosting an international workshop on this issue. The interagency group will report its recommendations within a year for approval and subsequent implementation by individual agencies.

Promote Lifelong Ocean Education

The Bush Administration considers lifelong education essential for fostering a strong economy, promoting healthy ecosystems and preparing a competitive workforce with the scientific understanding needed to balance the sustainable use and conservation of our natural resources. The Administration supports promoting ocean literacy and ocean education. Successful ocean stewardship and conservation depend on informed policy-makers and an informed public. In addition to formal education (i.e., K-12, colleges, and universities), the Bush Administration supports reaching the broader public through aquaria, zoos, museums, and the Internet, among other means.

- **Increase Ocean Education Coordination.** The newly established Committee on Ocean Policy will coordinate Federal education and outreach activities. A high-level focus will ensure: a coordinated education and outreach message; the integration of education and outreach components into research, exploration and management activities; that data collected through ocean and Earth observations are translated into useable forms for teachers, students, and the general public; that State and local educators are involved in developing high-quality education materials by participating Federal agencies; the ocean workforce of tomorrow is well-prepared; that we continue to expand innovative means for bringing ocean science into classrooms and reaching the broader public; and that other identified needs are adequately addressed.
- **Expand NOAA's Authority to Education and Outreach.** In December 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The law:

- provides authority for NOAA to engage in formal and informal education activities, including primary and secondary education, in support of the agency's mission goals, and
- establishes the Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship Program, whereby NOAA will award undergraduate scholarships in oceanic and atmospheric sciences, research, technology, and education. The scholarship honors Senator Hollings' longstanding commitment to ocean policy, including his sponsorship of the Act that created the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

These provisions will enable NOAA to incorporate a broad education and outreach mission into its operations, thereby enhancing ocean literacy and stewardship by bringing NOAA science into classrooms and communities. The language of these provisions reflects the expanded education authority for NOAA that the Bush Administration included in its proposed NOAA Organic Act, transmitted to Congress in June 2004.

- **Support the Ocean Science Initiative at the Smithsonian Institution.** The Smithsonian Institution is creating an Ocean Science Initiative that includes a new 26,000 square foot state-of-the-art Ocean Hall, an Ocean Web Portal, and the Center for Ocean Science. The Ocean Hall, expected to open in 2008, is a partnership between Smithsonian and NOAA. The Web Portal will provide virtual access to the museum's marine collection, research, and exhibits to scientists, students, and the public. The Center for Ocean Science will promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing among scientists and policymakers.
- **Expand the Coastal America Learning Center Network.** In January 2005, the Bush Administration will dedicate the North Carolina Aquarium Complex, which includes three facilities throughout the State, as the 18th Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center. This dedication builds on the October 2004 dedication of the John G. Shedd Aquarium – the first Learning Center located in the Great Lakes region. Located on Lake Michigan, the Shedd Aquarium is strategically positioned to promote public stewardship and awareness of the Great Lakes ecosystem. This is consistent with President Bush's commitment to protect, restore, and improve the Great Lakes region.
- **Expand the Sea Grant Program Internationally.** In response to direct requests from interested foreign governments and universities, the Administration will conduct a donors conference in Latin America, hold a workshop in Southeast Asia, and develop a technical assistance plan in North Africa in order to help introduce and adapt the successful U.S. Sea Grant system of applied research, extension, and education to countries in these regions. Sea Grant will help create a global network of institutions dedicated to applying the knowledge and technologies that lead to sustainable forms of coastal and marine resource development and conservation.

ENHANCING THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF OCEAN, COASTAL, AND GREAT LAKES RESOURCES

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Work with Regional Fisheries Councils to Promote Greater Use of Market-based System for Fisheries Management
- Foster a Balanced Representation for Regional Fishery Management Councils
- Harmonize Recreational Fishing Data Acquisition for Fishery Management Purposes
- Establish Guidelines and Procedures for the Use of Science in Fisheries Management
- Implement Coral Reef Local Action Strategies
- Re-establish Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee
- Propose National Offshore Aquaculture Legislation
- Coordinate and Better Integrate the Existing Network of Marine Managed Areas
- Adopt an Ocean Parks Strategy

Achieving Sustainable Marine Fisheries

Commercial and recreational marine fisheries are an important source of economic revenue and jobs. The commercial fishing industry's total annual value is estimated to exceed \$28 billion, while the recreational saltwater fishing industry is valued at approximately \$30 billion annually. The Bush Administration has been making major improvements in management of the Nation's fisheries. Since 2000, 17 major stocks have been rebuilt and/or removed from the list of overfished stocks (dropping from 56 to 39); almost all (over 93 percent) of the remaining overfished stocks have rebuilding plans in place; the number of species subject to overfishing has decreased by 37 (48 percent); and the number of stocks with an "unknown" status level has decreased by 48 (25 percent). In order to maintain these two industries as a healthy part of the U.S. economy and to promote a healthy marine ecosystem, the Federal government needs to continue to take steps to improve fisheries management.

- **Work with Regional Fisheries Councils to Promote Greater use of Market-based System for Fisheries Management.** The Administration continues to support and will promote the use, as appropriate, of dedicated access privileges, such as individual fishing quotas (IFQs), for improving fisheries management. An IFQ is a management program that provides individual fishermen an exclusive, market-based share of the annual harvest quota (generally a percent share). Each participant can use his or her share of the quota at any time during the fishing season unless time/area restrictions are in effect. Encouraging market-based incentives to adjust harvest capacity in a fishery can help end the race for fish, improve product quality, enhance safety at sea, and make fishing operations more efficient, ultimately improving the livelihood of those who depend on them.
 - In the 109th Congress, the Administration will propose updated legislation to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to explicitly allow the use of

- dedicated access privileges, such as IFQs, as a management tool. The proposed legislation will strike a balance between assuring flexibility in development of IFQ programs and the need to observe certain protections.
- The President also directs NOAA to develop, in consultation with the Regional Fishery Management Councils and interested parties, national guidelines for the development and implementation of IFQ allocations.
- **Foster a Balanced Representation for Regional Fishery Management Councils.** In the 109th Congress, the Administration will transmit a proposal to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to require governors to submit a slate of nominees for Regional Fishery Management Council seats that represents a balanced apportionment in marine fisheries in their respective States.
 - **Harmonize Recreational Fishing Data Acquisition for Fishery Management Purposes.** NOAA will work with States, Regional Fishery Management Councils, Interstate Fishery Commissions, other interested and affected parties, and Federal agencies as appropriate 1) to harmonize data collection from existing State saltwater fishing licenses and 2) to develop a draft proposal for mechanisms to complete the existing State-based saltwater fishing license network or propose appropriate alternatives that would improve fisheries management, especially in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.
 - **Establish Guidelines and Procedures for the Use of Science in Fisheries Management.** The Administration supports the use of peer-reviewed science in resource management decisions. Therefore, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the President directs NOAA to establish guidelines and procedures for the development and application of scientific advice for fisheries management decisions, in consultation with the Regional Fishery Management Councils, Interstate Fishery Commissions, stakeholders, and other agencies as appropriate. Standard review procedures and guidelines will increase the efficient use of the best available scientific information for management considerations.
 - **Foster Sustainable Harvests of Key Fish Species in the Caribbean and nearby Atlantic.** American consumers and seafood producers rely heavily on key species – spiny lobster and queen conch – captured in the Caribbean. Caribbean economies depend upon sales to the U.S. market. However, current fishing practices in the region are at high risk for decreasing landings of key species over time. The Bush Administration will work with international partners to revitalize, reform and strengthen the Western and Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission with the goal of developing sustainable harvests of key stocks.
 - **Establish an Implementation Plan for Combating International “Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported” Fishing.** The Bush Administration will review the recommendations contained within the U.S. National Plan of Action (NPOA) for Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) fishing, prioritize the actions to be taken, and establish a specific plan of implementation. The U.S. will complete this review and prioritization process prior to the March 2005 session of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries that will specifically deal with IUU fishing concerns. In addition, early in 2005, an interagency taskforce, including representatives from agencies that developed the NPOA and in consultation with other entities as appropriate, will

convene to evaluate opportunities for ways to reduce incidents of IUU fishing as foreseen in the NPOA. The taskforce and other entities will also consider options involving greater use of individual fishing quotas and other initiatives.

Promote Coral Reef and Deep Coral Conservation and Education

Coral reefs, and their associated systems of mangroves and seagrasses, are the world's most biologically diverse marine ecosystems. Important assets to local and national economies, they provide fisheries for food, materials for new medicines, and income from tourism and recreation, as well as protect coastal communities from storms. NOAA estimates the commercial value of U.S. fisheries from coral reefs is over \$100 million. Deep sea corals are related, but distinct from tropical coral reefs, and are generally found in cooler waters. The Bush Administration is taking the following actions to support the conservation of both types of coral ecosystems:

- **Implement Coral Reef Local Action Strategies.** The President will request \$2.7 million for Coral Reef Local Action Strategies in his FY 2006 budget. The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and the members of its seven jurisdictions (Florida, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands) have spent two years developing coral reef local action strategies to address key threats to coral reefs in their jurisdiction. This effort is a significant step forward in advancing the goal of cooperative conservation between the Federal, State, Territorial, and Commonwealth governments.
- **Protect the Northwestern Hawaiian Island Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.** In FY 2004, divers sponsored by a major Federal-State interagency partnership removed 123 tons of derelict fishing gear from the beaches and reefs of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The Administration continues to take steps to designate the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, the largest marine protected area in the Western Hemisphere, as the 14th national marine sanctuary.
- **Form New International Partnerships to Enhance Management of Coral Reefs.** In December 2004, NOAA, the State of Florida, and Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding to improve coral reef resilience, the natural ability of corals to survive and recover from stresses in the natural environment. Managing to support coral reef resilience is a strategy that is emerging in response to large-scale threats, such as hurricanes and coral bleaching. The partnership will focus on NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and will emphasize coordinating scientific research, exchanging information on emerging management strategies, and developing joint projects.
- **Re-establish Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee.** Marine debris has a harmful effect on coral reefs and other valuable marine resources. In December 2004, the Administration re-established the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee. The members consist of NOAA, EPA, the Coast Guard, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of State. The Coordinating Committee's mandate will encompass reducing marine debris from all sources. One of the Coordinating Committee's initial actions will be to focus on derelict fishing gear.

- **Foster Coral Reef Protection and Conservation by Recreational and Agricultural Interests.** The Department of the Interior and the Boat Owners Association of the United States recently entered into an agreement that includes a public education effort aimed at recreational boaters that will stress the ecological importance of coral reefs and seabed grass and how to avoid damaging them during recreational activities. This is the first time the Department of the Interior has entered into an agreement of this scope with a national boating advocacy group for the conservation of coral reefs and related habitats. In addition, the Department of Agriculture is providing funding to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's "Conservation on Private Lands Program" for four land-based conservation projects benefiting coral reef ecosystems. The projects include enhancing water quality through riparian planting, developing informative watershed handbooks, and developing demonstration, outreach and, education projects.

- **Develop "Biocriteria" for Coral Reefs.** EPA is developing biological assessment methods and biological criteria for States, Tribes and Territories to use in evaluating the health of coral reefs and associated water quality. These methods will allow resource managers to identify reefs at risk and to assess the effectiveness of restoration techniques.

- **Research, Survey, and Protect Deep-Sea Coral Communities.**
 - The Committee on Ocean Policy will determine which agency or agencies should take the lead in coordinating the Federal government's management and research activities with respect to deep-sea corals.
 - The New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council recently approved an amendment to the monkfish management plan that places a moratorium on dredging in certain submerged canyon areas off the northeast coast of the United States that contain vast quantities of deep-sea corals. NOAA is currently working with the regional fishery management councils to provide technical assistance to facilitate council consideration of measures to conserve and manage deep-sea coral communities. The Administration encourages all regional fishery management councils to take action, where appropriate, to protect deep-sea corals when developing and implementing regional fishery management plans.
 - The Department of the Interior is currently engaged through FY2006 in a three-year, \$3 million survey of deep-sea corals in the Gulf of Mexico that involves the use of a manned submersible to survey and sample such habitats. Based on this research, DOI took action to conserve known deep-sea coral communities in the Gulf of Mexico that were located during surveys conducted by the Minerals Management Service.
 - NOAA is the primary Federal agency involved in two international deep-sea coral exploration missions scheduled for 2005, which will be conducted jointly with several European Union nations.
 - NOAA is in the process of developing a Status Report on Deep-Sea Corals in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone, which is expected to be published in 2005.

Enhance Conservation of Marine Mammals, Sharks, and Sea Turtles

Marine mammals, sea turtles, and sharks are marine species that are of special concern and face a variety of threats from human activities. The Administration is moving forward to protect these species in the following ways:

- **ICCAT Adoption of U.S. Proposal for International Shark Conservation.** As a result of U.S. leadership, in November 2004, the 63-nation International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) agreed to prohibit the destructive fishing practice of “shark finning” in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Gulf of Mexico to reduce bycatch of sharks, and to increase research into shark populations and distributions.
- **Promote International Marine Turtle Conservation.** In July 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004, which aims to support the international conservation of sea turtles and their nesting habitats. The President directs the Secretary of the Interior to implement this important legislation.
- **Propose Legislation to Reauthorize the Marine Mammal Protection Act.** In the 109th Congress, the Administration will propose updated legislation reauthorizing the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which would enhance enforcement authorities for NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and would increase penalties for violators of the Act. The proposed bill would create a more enforceable definition of marine mammal harassment, a prohibited activity under the Act. This new definition will promote greater public understanding of acceptable activities relating to marine mammals and will aid Federal enforcement actions against violators. The proposed legislation would also improve efforts to reduce marine mammal bycatch.
- **Implement New National Bycatch Strategy.** In 2004, the Administration began implementing a new National Bycatch Strategy that includes regional “report cards” and bycatch reduction implementation plans, a working group to develop a national approach to standardized bycatch reporting programs, expanding international approaches to bycatch reduction, undertaking new education and outreach efforts, and establishing a national cooperative research program and coordinator. To foster implementation of this National Bycatch Strategy, NOAA conducted several sea turtle bycatch reduction training workshops with commercial fishermen in 2004 in the United States and internationally.
- **Propose New Limits on Atlantic Gill Net Fishing to Protect Dolphins and Sea Turtles.** In November 2004, the Administration proposed limits on gill net fishing in waters off the Atlantic coast to reduce the accidental catch of bottlenose dolphins and threatened sea turtle species. Recently, bycatch rates have increased for both species. The proposal also calls on NOAA to conduct research with the fishing industry into ways to promote safer fishing gear and to launch an education and outreach campaign to familiarize commercial fishermen with the new regulations.
- **Create a National Strategy for Fisheries Enforcement.** In 2004, the U.S. Coast Guard completed Ocean Guardian, its Fisheries Enforcement Strategic Plan (2004-2014), in close consultation with NOAA and the U.S. Department of State to ensure alignment with their strategic visions. Although each agency requires a separate strategic plan based on agency roles and responsibilities in fisheries management and enforcement, these strategies complement each other and, when used together, form the National Strategy for Fisheries Enforcement.

Advance Offshore Aquaculture

The United States imports a large amount of seafood from other nations and currently suffers a seafood trade deficit of \$7 billion annually. The U.S. offshore aquaculture industry is attempting to establish aquaculture facilities in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) but faces a confounding array of regulatory and legal obstacles. The Administration has taken the following actions to support the development of environmentally sound aquaculture in the EEZ and internationally.

- **Propose National Offshore Aquaculture Legislation.** In the 109th Congress, the Administration will propose a National Offshore Aquaculture Act that provides the Department of Commerce clear authority to regulate offshore aquaculture. This bill will empower the Department of Commerce to assist the private sector in obtaining necessary Federal agency approval for establishing an offshore aquaculture facility. The Department of Commerce has primary responsibility for the management and conservation of living marine resources in the EEZ and, as such, will ensure that offshore aquaculture enterprises operate in an environmentally sustainable manner that is compatible with existing uses.
- **Established Aquaculture Effluent Guidelines.** EPA has authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate pollutant discharges to waters of the United States. This authority applies to concentrated aquaculture facilities, including marine aquaculture, and is administered under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program. Under this authority, EPA recently issued guidelines for discharges from aquaculture facilities to help protect water quality.
- **Support Aquaculture in the Americas.** In 2005, working with Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) partners, the Administration will support two workshops in South America to promote sustainable aquaculture and the development of an aquaculture network in the Americas.

Improve Marine Managed Areas

- **Coordinate and Better Integrate the Existing Network of Marine Managed Areas.** National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Marine Sanctuaries, and National Estuarine Research Reserves conserve a rich assemblage of coral reefs, estuaries, wetlands, kelp forests and beaches. These parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves were established under separate legal authorities and are separately managed by the Department of the Interior (parks and refuges) and the Department of Commerce (marine sanctuaries) or are cooperatively managed by the Department of Commerce and States (estuarine reserves). Many National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and National Estuarine Research Reserves around the nation overlap, adjoin or lie near each other at various sites. The Administration proposes to further integrate the management of existing parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves in marine and coastal areas. These actions, where appropriate, will complement actions under Executive Order 13158, regarding Marine Protected Areas. Taking steps to integrate the existing marine managed areas network represents a new way to promote coordination of research, public education and management activities at neighboring parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves. The proposed actions will be consistent with maintaining appropriate navigational freedoms for commerce needs. Upcoming actions to carry out this goal include:

- Complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperative enforcement among the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Sanctuary program.
 - Complete a new MOU on comprehensive coordination between the National Park Service and the National Marine Sanctuary Program, and adding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (existing NPS-NMSP MOU expires June 2005).
 - Coordinate Regional Planning Workshops/National Summit with the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Sanctuary Program and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.
- **Adopt an Ocean Parks Strategy.** In early 2005, the National Park Service will announce its Ocean Parks Strategy. The Strategy is the culmination of over two years of work, taking into account the views and suggestions of key National Park Service and NOAA field personnel and the public. Key elements of the Strategy include: characterizing marine species and habitats; evaluating and monitoring their condition; increasing the understanding of how marine ecosystems function; and developing cooperative science based fishery management plans between parks and State agencies, such as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission/Biscayne National Park Fisheries Management plan.

Manage Energy Development on the Outer Continental Shelf

- **Support Offshore Energy Development.** In June 2002, the Bush Administration proposed legislation to Congress granting authority to DOI to manage energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The Commission stated that DOI's experience in managing the oil, gas and mineral programs on the OCS provides a successful management model for a wide variety of offshore activities. The proposed legislation would amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act by establishing a uniform permitting process coordinated across appropriate Federal agencies, with DOI serving as the lead Federal agency. The proposed legislation would direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish an authorization process and regulatory framework for non-traditional energy projects including, but not limited to, renewable energy projects such as wind, wave, and solar energy. The proposed bill would also authorize DOI to permit OCS facilities to be converted to other approved uses. The Administration will work with Congress, State, Tribes, and local governments on this important issue.

Preserving the Nation's Maritime Heritage

- **Implement the International Agreement Concerning the *RMS Titanic*.** During the 109th Congress, the Bush Administration will propose legislation to implement the International Agreement Concerning the Shipwrecked Vessel *RMS Titanic* signed by the United States in 2004 to protect the wreck and preserve its status as a memorial to the lives lost when it sank. The United States negotiated the international agreement concerning the *RMS Titanic* site with the United Kingdom, France, and Canada. The agreement designates the *RMS Titanic* as an international maritime memorial and regulates visitation, exploration, and artifact recovery at the site.
- **Protect Sunken Military Craft.** In October 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2005. Among other

provisions, the Act protects any United States sunken military craft from removal, disturbance, or injury except where authorization is given for archeological, historical, or educational purposes. The Act also encourages the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to negotiate and conclude international agreements to protect sunken military craft. The Bush Administration supports the conservation of sunken military craft and the maritime heritage that these vessels represent.

- **Interpreting Great Lakes Maritime Heritage.** In October 2004, NOAA's Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve broke ground for a 20,000 square-foot Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena, Michigan, that will preserve and highlight the maritime history of the Great Lakes and the shipwrecks of Michigan's Thunder Bay. NOAA has provided \$2.5 million for the establishment of the center.

MANAGING COASTS AND THEIR WATERSHEDS

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

Activities in upland watersheds can have direct and indirect impacts on the health of our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters. Therefore, the effective management of those waters depends a great deal on actions taken in our coastal areas and far from the coastal fringe. Approaching the management of our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources from a watershed perspective allows impacts from both coastal and upland activities to be taken in to account, providing a more comprehensive basis from which to protect, restore, and conserve the Nation's waters.

The Administration is working actively to assist State, Tribal, and local stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies to protect the nation's coastal resources. Examples of successful comprehensive watershed planning efforts include EPA's National Estuary Program, the Chesapeake Bay Program, and the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Initiative (CalFed). These and similar programs engage stakeholders in assessing the resource problems and opportunities, setting goals and objectives, designing and implementing restoration plans, and evaluating results.

The Administration is moving forward with the following new initiatives and is building on the successes of many existing programs in the areas of coastal and watershed management, conserving and restoring coastal habitat, invasive species, coastal water pollution, and natural hazards.

Coastal and Watershed Management

- **Conduct Community Workshops to Improve Watershed Protection.** In FY2005, NOAA and EPA, in partnership with other relevant Federal agencies, will initiate a series of community workshops to improve integration and coordination of Coastal Zone Management Act, Clean Water Act, and other Federal programs in order to better assist States, Tribes, and local governments in addressing priority nonpoint source pollution and land use issues in watersheds that have significant impacts on coastal resources.
- **Complete State Participation in Coastal Zone Management System.** In November 2004, NOAA received a letter from Illinois Governor Blagojevich indicating that the State of Illinois plans to participate in the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program. NOAA will assist the State with program development. The eventual approval of an Illinois Coastal Management Plan would complete the voluntary CZM system, with all eligible States and Territories participating.
- **Support the Reauthorization of Coastal Zone Management Act.** The Administration will work with Congress, States, Tribal, and local governments on the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

- **Award Targeted Watersheds Grants.** In July 2004, EPA selected 14 watersheds – representing 17 States – to receive \$15 million from EPA’s Targeted Watersheds Grant Program. The selected areas stretch from Cape Fear on the Atlantic Coast, through much of the Mississippi River Basin, to the Dungeness River in Washington State and the Kenai River in Alaska. Special consideration was given to watersheds along the Mississippi River Basin, where market-based water quality pilot projects are being implemented to address excessive nutrient run-off along the River. EPA’s FY2005 appropriation includes \$18 million to continue this program.
- **Implement California Water Supply Reliability and Environmental Improvement Act.** In October 2004, Congress enacted and President Bush signed the Water Supply Reliability and Environmental Improvement Act, also known as CalFed, authorizing a major environmental initiative to restore California’s critical San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta estuary while also addressing the needs of urban and agricultural waters users.
- **Establish Forecasting System for Harmful Algal Blooms.** In September 2004, NOAA announced a new operational ecological forecast system for harmful algal blooms in the Gulf of Mexico. The system produces daily information and twice weekly forecasts that are used to determine the current and future location and intensity of blooms and the likely impacts to the environment. In addition, NOAA is training local government officials on how to use these forecasts for coastal management purposes.

Advancing Watershed Conservation through the USDA Farm Bill

- **Include Selected Watersheds in Conservation Security Program.** In November 2004, USDA announced the selection of over 200 watersheds for the FY 2005 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up to be held this winter. The CSP is an innovative program designed to support farmers and ranchers who are already meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their lands, and to create incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance. USDA will offer the program in every State and the Caribbean region.
- **Award Conservation Innovation Grants.** In September 2004, USDA announced the selection of 41 projects in 29 States to receive nearly \$14.3 million in Conservation Innovation Grants. The grants will fund the development and adoption of innovative conservation technologies and approaches through pilot projects and field trials to improve the quality of the Nation’s natural resources.
- **Protect Ohio River Basin.** In October 2004, USDA and the State of Ohio signed a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreement to protect the Ohio River Basin, a key watershed contributing nutrient loadings to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. The new agreement provides more than \$200 million to improve water quality in the Scioto River Watershed by helping farmers and ranchers develop conservation practices on 70,000 acres along more than 3,200 miles of rivers and streams. Earlier this year, USDA also announced a CREP agreement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which will provide an additional \$146 million to protect the Ohio River Basin.

Conserve and Restore Coastal Habitat

The continued health and biodiversity of marine and estuarine systems depends on the maintenance of high-quality habitat. The same areas that often attract human development also provide essential food, cover, migratory corridors, and breeding/nursery areas for a broad array of coastal and marine organisms. Habitat loss and degradation are key issues facing coasts and estuaries around the country. Examples of efforts in which the Administration is involved to protect and restore estuarine and marine habitats include:

- **Implement the Administration's Wetlands Initiative.** On Earth Day, 2004, President Bush announced an aggressive new national goal to move beyond a policy of "no net loss" of wetlands to achieve an overall increase in America's wetlands each year. The Administration, through the combined efforts of the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Transportation, the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA, will create, improve, and protect at least three million wetland acres over the next five years.
- **Implement Next Stage of Everglades Restoration Plan.** The FY 2005 appropriation contains approximately \$180 million of the President's \$231 million request to implement the 30-year Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and related Everglades activities, bolstering the Administration's support for the \$7.8 billion Plan. To expedite implementation of the Plan, the State of Florida announced, in October 2004, the "Acceler8 Initiative," the goal of which is to complete eight major projects to expand water storage, improve water quality, and restore water flows in the Everglades by 2010.
- **Complete Near-Term Coastal Louisiana Restoration Plan.** In November 2004, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released for public review and comment its final draft Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Ecosystem Restoration Plan. The goal of the LCA Plan is to reverse the degradation of the coastal ecosystem by maximizing the use of restoration strategies to reintroduce flows of river water, nutrients, and sediment to coastal wetlands, and to maintain the structural integrity of the coastal ecosystem. The Plan will identify and prioritize the most critical ecological needs of the area and the kinds of restoration that could be implemented to address those needs, while continuing to pursue further studies and planning to support current and future ecosystem restoration efforts. Upon its completion, the plan will be delivered to Congress for consideration.
- **Foster Local Restoration Projects.** Locally led coastal habitat restoration projects are flourishing all across the country. The Federal government encourages successful community-based approaches and management techniques to protect and restore the nation's coastal watersheds. Successful restoration projects enhance knowledge and understanding of the local resources, and involve strong partnerships, creative socio-economic approaches, achievable plans, and measurable environmental results.
 - **Bolsa Chica Wetlands Restoration Project Breaks Ground.** In October 2004, officials from State and Federal agencies and the city of Huntington Beach joined with local environmental groups to break ground for the Bolsa Chica Wetland Restoration Project – at 1,247 acres, the largest wetland restoration in Southern California history. Federal and State government partners in the \$65 million restoration project include EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, the Department of the Interior, and the State of California's Coastal Commission, the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Fish and Game, the Coastal Conservancy, and the State Lands Commission.

- **Implement Gulf of Maine Habitat Restoration Strategy.** In October 2004, NOAA released a comprehensive plan for State and local habitat restoration experts that will be used to prioritize and restore coastal and marine habitat throughout the Gulf of Maine. A product of the Gulf of Maine Council, the strategy identifies resources of regional significance, prioritizes restoration projects, and promotes habitat restoration at the regional level.
- **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants Announced.** In FY 2005, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will award more than \$13 million in grants for 16 projects to conserve, restore, and protect coastal wetlands. States awarded grants under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program are Alaska, Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

Preventing the Spread of Invasive Species

- **Establish Mandatory Ballast Water Management Program.** In July 2004, the U.S. Coast Guard established regulations requiring a national ballast water management program for all vessels equipped with ballast water tanks that enter or operate within U.S. waters. Ballast water is a major pathway for the introduction of non-native species. These regulations increase the Coast Guard's ability to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into our oceans, Great Lakes, coasts and waterways. The U.S. Coast Guard is now developing standards for invasive species in ballast water.
- **Public-Private Partnership Launches Habitattitude™.** In September 2004, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, and Minnesota Sea Grant launched Habitattitude™, a new public education and outreach effort to encourage aquarium owners and water gardeners to avoid introduction of non-native species by adopting simple prevention steps when faced with an unwanted aquatic plant or fish.
- **New Campaign against Aquatic Invasions.** The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and Portland State University are joining forces to advance a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding and managing aquatic invasions. The new Aquatic BioInvasion Research and Policy Institute, established in October 2004, will blend a wide range of disciplines, including biology, environmental sciences, economics, engineering and social sciences, to develop novel approaches to research, management and policy for biological invasions.
- **Inaugurate New Invasive Species Advisory Committee.** In October 2004, the National Invasive Species Council welcomed the newly appointed Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC). ISAC will provide recommendations and expertise to guide Federal invasive species efforts to ensure that the Federal government is coordinating efforts to reduce the economic, environmental, and health-related damage caused by invasive species.
- **Complete Construction of Great Lakes Barrier to Asian Carp.** In October 2004, the Army Corps of Engineers began constructing a permanent electric barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to prevent the inter basin transfer of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species. The Canal links the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.

Reduce Coastal Water Pollution

- **Set New Bacteria Standards for Beaches.** In November 2004, as part of the Administration's Clean Beaches Plan, EPA set new health-based Federal bacteria standards for those States and Territories bordering Great Lakes or ocean waters that had not yet adopted standards in accordance with the *BEACH Act of 2000*. This action complements an April 2004 Administration announcement of \$10 million in grants for beach monitoring and public notification programs in eligible coastal States, Territories, and Tribes, including those bordering the Great Lakes.
- **Fund the Great Lakes Legacy Act.** EPA's FY2005 appropriation contains \$22.5 million request to clean up contaminated sediments in the Great Lakes basin, under the authority of the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002. The Act authorizes efforts to assist with the remediation of contaminated sediments, related public outreach efforts, and research activities.
- **Enhance EPA's Storm Water Management Program.** EPA is working actively with key stakeholders to enhance the national storm water management program. Over the next 12 months EPA will develop a national storm water program evaluation system, develop tools for municipalities that promote better storm water management systems, provide training for municipalities on storm water regulatory requirements, develop guidance for the construction industry on designing and implementing storm water pollution prevention plans, and continue to support research and development opportunities to reduce impacts of storm water on water quality.
- **Publish Water Quality Trading Assessment Handbook.** In November 2004, EPA released its "Water Quality Trading Assessment Handbook." The Handbook is designed to help water quality managers and watershed stakeholders determine if trading can be used in their watersheds to make cost-effective pollutant reductions that achieve water quality standards, and to identify when and where trading is likely to be the appropriate tool for accomplishing water quality goals.
- **Healthy Forests Initiative.** The President's Healthy Forests Initiative is helping to prevent catastrophic fires by managing forests with controlled burns, cleaning out the underbrush, and thinning the areas that are vulnerable to intense fires and insect attacks. Controlling forest fires reduces sediment runoff into coastal watersheds as a result of catastrophic wildfires.

Reduce Airborne Pollution of Coastal Waters through New Legislation and Regulations

- **Seek Passage of Clear Skies Legislation.** In 2002, the President proposed the Clear Skies Initiative, which will dramatically improve air quality and cut airborne deposition of pollution into coastal watersheds and ecosystems through aggressive reductions in air emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide, and mercury from power plants. Clear Skies will remove more pollution over the decade from 2010-2020 than current requirements of the Clean Air Act.
 - **Clean Air Interstate Rule.** In January 2004, EPA proposed a new rule to require power plants in the eastern half of the U.S. to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide by nearly 70 percent, and NO_x emissions by approximately 65 percent. The NO_x reductions will provide benefits for coastal waters by decreasing the airborne nitrogen loads deposited in those waters.

- **Clean Air Mercury Rule.** In January 2004, EPA proposed the Clean Air Mercury Rule which will, for the first time ever, control mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. When fully implemented, the proposal would cut mercury emissions by nearly 70 percent. Mercury is a toxic, persistent pollutant that can, through atmospheric deposition, enter lakes, streams and estuaries where it accumulates in fish and animal tissues. People are exposed to this mercury primarily by eating fish.

- **Implement Clean Air Nonroad Diesel Rule.** In May 2004, EPA finalized a rule that will dramatically reduce pollution from heavy-duty diesel engines used in construction, agricultural and industrial equipment. Soot and NOx emissions from new engines will decrease by more than 90 percent by 2014, and the sulfur content of diesel fuel will be cut by 99 percent by 2010. These reductions will result in immediate and significant environmental and public health benefits by reducing particulate matter from these engines. Implementation of the Clean Air Rules will reduce air pollution and assure that most areas that currently do not meet new air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter will meet them by 2015 without having to take further action locally. These environmental benefits will be achieved while protecting the Nation's economic prosperity.

SUPPORTING MARINE TRANSPORTATION

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Elevate the Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System
- Implement the Administration's National Freight Action Agenda
- Reduce Vessel Pollution/Federal Clean Marina Challenge

Improve the U.S. Marine Transportation System

The U.S. Marine Transportation System (MTS), which consists of waterways, ports, and their connections, commercial and recreational vessels, vehicles and system users such as importers and exporters, is a vital public-private partnership. The waterborne cargo moving on the MTS contributes more than \$742 billion annually to the U.S. gross domestic product and creates employment for more than 13 million individuals. As the U.S. economy continues to expand and the Bush Administration pursues greater international trade liberalization, the importance of our marine transportation infrastructure will continue to grow. The projected expansion of commercial and recreational vessel operations brings with it the challenge to ensure that vessels in our oceans, coasts, Great Lakes, and waterways are operating in an environmentally responsible manner. Therefore, the Administration is moving forward with the following actions to improve the MTS:

- **Elevate the Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System.** The President directs the creation of a cabinet-level Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System (ICMTS). The purpose of ICMTS will be to improve Federal MTS coordination and policies; promote the environmentally sound integration of marine transportation with other modes of transportation and with other ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes uses; develop outcome-based goals for the MTS and a method for monitoring progress towards those goals; coordinate Federal annual budget requests and regulatory activities that impact the MTS; and recommend strategies and plans to maintain and improve the MTS.
- **Implement the Administration's National Freight Action Agenda.** The President directs the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with marine transportation stakeholders, Federal agencies, and State and local governments, to implement the Administration's National Freight Action Agenda. The Administration's new National Freight Action Agenda has identified seven high priority freight initiatives including:
 - facilitate the development and planning of major intermodal freight projects;
 - promote intelligent transportation technologies to improve freight transportation efficiency and management of existing infrastructure;
 - improve coordination of planning and financing of public and private infrastructure to ensure system connectivity;
 - enhance freight professional capacity building;
 - improve the timeliness, relevance and quality of freight data;

- accelerate the development of short sea shipping; and
 - identify opportunities through the Portfields Initiative to expand constrained port capacity through the redevelopment of brownfields in a manner that promotes environmental stewardship, and economic growth.
- **Assess Short Sea Shipping.** As many of the nation's major ports are nearing capacity, short sea shipping, the movement of cargo by inland and coastal waterways, is an emerging mode of transporting cargo. The Department of Transportation is carrying out an intensive study to assess the commercial feasibility of short sea shipping operations to determine if these services may be economically viable alternatives to overland freight transportation and worthy of future initiatives.
- **Reduce Taxes on MTS users.** In October 2004, Congress enacted and the President signed into law the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 that reduced the Federal tax on a range of MTS activities including:
- creating an alternative tax on qualified shipping activities that is based on tonnage rather than the traditional corporate income tax; this option should reduce the tax disadvantage suffered by U.S. flag ships competing in a global marketplace;
 - amending the tax code to eliminate tax disincentives for Americans to invest in global shipping businesses; and
 - reducing the Federal tax on motor fuels for marine transportation users such as tug boat operators. The American Waterways Operators, an association of tug boat and barge operators, estimates that reducing the tax on motor fuels will save its members approximately \$20 million a year and will enhance economic development by reducing the cost of shipping goods to businesses, including manufacturers and consumers.
- **Improve Navigation.** The Administration requested and received a \$2.7 million increase from Congress for NOAA in FY 2005 to update the current 175-station National Water Level Observation Network (located in or near major U.S. seaports) to provide marine transportation users with real time tide and water level information, which is essential for efficient vessel operations and safe navigation.
- **Reduce Vessel Pollution**
- Launch Federal Clean Marina Challenge. In early 2005, the Administration will launch the Clean Marina Challenge. The Administration is committed to "Greening the Government" (Executive Order 13148) and ensuring that Federal agencies do seek to minimize harm to the nation's natural resources. The Clean Marina program is an existing voluntary partnership between the Federal government, States, and private marinas that promotes State certification of marinas that practice good environmental stewardship in areas such as pollution prevention and waste management. The President is directing the Federal government to work toward achieving Clean Marina certification for all marinas that are currently operating in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and military bases in coastal States that participate in the Clean Marina program. Through the Federal Clean Marina Challenge, the President is committing the Federal government to provide advice, assistance and support to help Federally-owned marinas set an example for all marina operators.

- Decrease Vessel Air Emissions. In 2005, the Bush Administration, through EPA, will propose a rule that will require more stringent emissions standards for most new commercial and recreational marine diesel engines, which would substantially reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide and particulate matter.

ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL OCEAN POLICY AND SCIENCE

ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Support Accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
- Increase Membership and Strengthen the Implementation of the London Convention
- Support an Integrated Approach to Oceans Management and Reduction of Land-based Pollution
- Work with Congress to Ratify Amendments to MARPOL Convention Cutting Pollution from Marine Engines Worldwide
- Link the Global Marine Assessment and Global Earth Observation System of Systems

Oceans are inherently global in nature, and many of the activities and proposals discussed in previous chapters naturally include international components. Since ocean issues present the international community with shared challenges, they also offer unique opportunities to build positive, long-term collaborative relationships. The Bush Administration is committed to actively maintaining and invigorating U.S. international leadership to advance international ocean science and policy issues. As with other international issues, effective U.S. leadership will depend in part on identification and mobilization of overarching goals, specific actions, venues in which to achieve them, and the broadest spectrum of actors to pursue them. In this context, we note the successful interagency coordination provided by the Administration's Oceans Subsidiary Policy Coordination Committee (falling under the authority of the National Security Council's Policy Coordinating Committee system) on international oceans issues, and the recent example of the White Water to Blue Water initiative that catalyzed the formation of numerous international projects between governmental, non-governmental, and private sector actors.

Advancing International Oceans Policy

- **Support Accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.** As a matter of national security, economic self-interest, and international leadership, the Bush Administration is committed to U.S. accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- **Partnership Creation: White Water to Blue Water Initiative.** The Bush Administration has taken a leadership role in integrated watershed and marine ecosystem-based management in the Gulf of Mexico and the wider Caribbean. Through its White Water to Blue Water initiative, the Administration is assisting in the formation of dynamic partnerships that promote sustainable environmental management in the Caribbean region. These partnerships are being formed with the widest possible array of potential participants (other national governments, financial institutions, international organizations, corporations, non-governmental organizations.)

- **Co-Host the International Coral Reef Initiative.** The United States was a leader in establishing the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI.) Over the past decade, ICRI has been the driving force behind international scientific, governmental and civil society efforts to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems. The Bush Administration will seek to co-host the ICRI Secretariat for the July 2007-2009 term.
- **Increase Membership and Strengthen the Implementation of the London Convention.** The London Convention is the primary platform that promotes international cooperation in reducing and managing the dumping of waste and other matter at sea. The Administration will take a leadership role in invigorating membership in, and strengthening implementation of, the 1996 Protocol to the Convention and, through this effort, enhancing implementation of the Convention itself. We will work together with the London Convention Secretariat, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and regional partners to strengthen technical outreach programs to enhance implementation.
- **Support an Integrated Approach to Oceans Management and Reduction of Land-based Pollution.** The Bush Administration will strive to reduce land-based pollution and provide new tools for effective stewardship of the ocean and its resources by integrating different approaches to oceans management, including the Global Program of Action on Land-Based Sources of Pollution, regional seas programs, observational efforts (the Global Ocean Observing System, the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System), and White Water to Blue Water. One specific target of opportunity for implementing this strategy is the 2006 meeting of the “Second Intergovernmental Review of the Global Program of Action on Land-Based Sources of Pollution.”
- **Work with Congress to Approve Ratification of Amendments to MARPOL Convention Cutting Pollution from Marine Engines Worldwide as Early as Possible in the 109th Congress.** President Bush transmitted Annex VI to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification on May 15, 2003. The MARPOL Convention is the international agreement that controls the accidental and operational discharges of pollutants from ships. MARPOL’s Annex VI, that establishes an international framework addressing air pollution from ships, will enter into force on May 19, 2005. Specifically, Annex VI will reduce the emission of nitrogen oxide (NOx) from certain large new marine diesel engines up to 30 percent from 1990 levels, will establish a global cap of 4.5 percent on the sulfur oxide (SOx) content of marine fuels, and will prohibit the deliberate emission of ozone-depleting substances. The Bush Administration is committed to working with Congress to ratify Annex VI.
- **Trade and International Oceans Policy.** The Administration’s trade agenda includes ongoing activities with significant relevance for oceans policy. The United States is a leader in pressing for improved fisheries subsidy disciplines in the current World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda. Also, the negotiation of free trade agreements (FTAs) provides opportunities for addressing ocean policy concerns through associated environmental cooperation mechanisms with U.S. trading partners. The Administration conducts environmental reviews of FTAs, which help ensure that trade and oceans policies are mutually supportive and identify opportunities for appropriate capacity building and cooperation on oceans issues.

Advancing International Oceans Science

- **Advance the Use of Large Marine Ecosystems.** The U.S. will promote, within the United Nations Environment Program’s regional seas programs and by international fisheries bodies, the

use of the Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) concept as a tool for enabling ecosystem-based management to provide a collaborative approach to management of resources within ecologically bounded transnational areas. This will be done in an international context and consistent with customary international law as reflected in 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

- **Link the Global Marine Assessment and Global Earth Observation System of Systems.** Through international cooperation, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) will collect and disperse data and information from terrestrial, atmospheric, climate, and ocean observations. The Global Marine Assessment (GMA), under discussion since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, will seek to establish a regular, comprehensive process of reporting and assessment of the state of the global marine environment. The Administration supports both efforts, and will actively seek to create international links between the two processes.

- **Leadership of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program.** Ocean drilling is the primary tool for sampling sediment and crustal rock from the seventy percent of the Earth's surface covered by oceans. It is the only technique for sampling anything more than a few meters beneath the ocean floor, and provides an essential capability to examine processes ranging from changes in the Earth's climate to the rifting and drifting of continents. The Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP), initiated in September 2003, is co-led by the United States and Japan. Building on past programs, IODP continues a tradition of U.S. leadership in pursuing international cooperation in ocean drilling.

Acronyms

ACWI	Advisory Committee on Water Information
AIS	Automatic Identification System
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
BEACH Act	Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000
CalFed	San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Initiative
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERP	Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CSP	Conservation Security Program
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
DOI	Department of the Interior
DPC	Domestic Policy Council
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GLOSS	Global Sea Level Observing System
GMA	Global Marine Assessment
GOOS	Global Ocean Observing System
H.R.	House Report
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICMTS	Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IFQ	Individual Fishing Quota
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IEOS	U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System
IOC	United Nations Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IODP	Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
IOOS	U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System
ISAC	Invasive Species Advisory Committee
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported
JSO	Joint Subcommittee on Oceans
LCA	Louisiana Coastal Area
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
MMS	Minerals Management Service

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTS	Marine Transportation System
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NMSP	National Marine Sanctuaries Program
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOx	Nitrogen Oxides
NPOA	National Plan of Action
NPS	National Park Service
NSF	National Science Foundation
NSTC	National Science and Technology Council
NTL	Notice to Lessees and Operators
OCS	Outer Continental Shelf
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSTP	Office of Science and Technology Policy
RMS	Royal Mail Steamer
SOx	Sulfur Oxides
UN	United Nations
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USNS	United States Naval Ship
WTO	World Trade Organization