

**Ocean Policy Statement Annotated Agenda**  
**MAFAC December 18-20, 2007**  
**St. Pete Beach, FL**

**1. Agenda item Title of Discussion:** Development of NOAA National Ocean Policy Statement; MAFAC's opportunities for giving policy advice.

**2. Discussion Leader/Presenter:**

Jim Gilmore, Strategic Planning Subcommittee Chair; Mark Holliday, NOAA Fisheries

**3. Objective/Purpose (e.g., brief statement of context and outcome being sought, e.g., information only; decision; action):**

The objective of this discussion is to: 1) Discuss the utility of NOAA creating one or more national ocean policy statements; 2) Elicit ideas on the possible topic/content for such statements; 3) Identify any recommendations for the process to develop/use such NOAA policy statements. 4) Identify areas and time frames for MAFAC input in providing policy advice.

**4. Background/Synopsis (brief executive summary of issue, include links to URL, other more detailed references):**

(1) Examining the different roles and division of responsibilities for ocean science and management were a large part of the US Commission on Ocean Policy's (USCOP) task. The basis for their recommendations affecting NOAA were partially driven by the sections of the Act/Report calling for:

(C) A review of the cumulative effect of Federal laws and regulations on United States ocean and coastal activities and resources and an examination of those laws and regulations for inconsistencies and contradictions that might adversely affect those ocean and coastal activities and resources, and recommendations for resolving such inconsistencies to the extent practicable. Such review shall also consider conflicts with State ocean and coastal management regimes.

and

(I) A review of the effectiveness and adequacy of existing Federal interagency ocean policy coordination mechanisms, and recommendations for changing or improving the effectiveness of such mechanisms necessary to respond to or implement the recommendations of the Commission.

Recommendations for new or expanded roles and responsibilities for NOAA in ocean policy were part of the USCOP report and the President's Ocean Action Plan. (See status table 1). More recently, several legislative initiatives are pending or have been initiated that address statutory responsibilities for NOAA in the ocean arena, including Oceans 21, NOAA Organic Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act reauthorization, Aquaculture bill and recent reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. (See status table 2).

These existing or proposed laws describe pieces of NOAA's mandate in the ocean arena. However, there is no synthesis of all the NOAA mandates in the form of a statement on ocean policy, identifying NOAA guidance and direction by which these mandates will be carried out. A

NOAA policy statement could inform agency-wide strategies for additional legislation, strategic planning and program and budget execution. One or more NOAA policy statements could also serve as a basis to facilitate discussion among NOAA constituents, Federal agencies, and Congressional offices regarding the scope, purpose, and context for developing a national statement of Ocean Policy.

The NOAA Ocean Council recently discussed the development of a NOAA ocean (and other) policy statements for review by the NOAA Executive Council and adoption by NOAA. The goal is for each draft policy statement to become the NOAA corporate view on that topic. This would enable current and future senior political and career leadership to effectively communicate NOAA's position, both internally and externally. Selected topics would be in areas where: 1) having clear and explicit policy would enhance NOAA's ability to implement its corporate strategy, and 2) the policy environment is sufficiently fluid for NOAA to pursue its objectives.

Priority areas for selecting topics would be given to: 1) new and emerging issues where NOAA can be proactive in developing positions, or 2) topics where gaps exist in current policies, or 3) topics where the current policy statements could be strengthened. The first statement suggested to be produced is the establishment of a NOAA Oceans Policy Statement.

**Trigger Questions:**

- **What are the pros and cons of creating a NOAA Ocean policy statement?**
- **What purposes would be served by developing such a statement?**
- **What scope and level of detail should be targeted?**
- **What role(s) would MAFAC have in advising NOAA on this topic and future statements?**
- **What is MAFAC's view relative to progress on implementation of the USCOP and Ocean Action Plan and recommended next steps?**

(2) The Secretary of Commerce has identified 21 priorities for the remainder of his administration. Of those, the four priorities that pertain to NOAA are: (1) Aquaculture legislation signed into law; (2) Proposed or final rules to end overfishing on all stocks currently experiencing overfishing; (3) Twenty-one Climate Change Science Projects; and (4) Effective management of the satellite program.

**Trigger Questions:**

- **Given this context, what are the legislative and policy priorities for the near and long-term (e.g., remainder of this administration/Vision 2020 time frame?) that MAFAC should be focusing on and/or giving policy advice? What form should the advice take?**