

August 19, 2003

David Kaiser
Federal Consistency Coordinator
Coastal Programs Division
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910



Dear Mr. Kaiser:

The Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed federal consistency regulations under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) printed in the *Federal Register* Vol. 68 no. 112, June 11, 2003. IPAA represents thousands of independent petroleum and natural gas producers across the country who produce 40 percent of our nation's oil and 75 percent of the natural gas.

The proposed changes contemplated under the federal consistency regulations would seriously impact the future health of independent oil and natural gas producers and could also harm the economy. We urge NOAA to closely review the implications of the proposed rule and ensure that the federal consistency process does not delay the development of secure domestic energy resources. Our concerns are further outlined in separate comments IPAA jointly filed with the American Petroleum Institute and other oil and gas trade associations.

Although our formal comments are fully outlined in our joint comments, IPAA suggests a number of modifications to improve the federal consistency process. These include:

- Clarify the proposal to ensure a state's role in review activities be limited to actions that directly affect its coastal zone;
- Ensure certainty, predictability and transparency in the federal consistency process by requiring a state to identify the data and information needs necessary for its consistency review at an early stage of the federal permitting process.
- Guarantee that override appeals decisions are made in a timely fashion.

We encourage NOAA to strongly consider all of these important issues as the agency finalizes the federal consistency regulations under the CZMA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel T. Naatz". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

Daniel T. Naatz
Director, Federal Resources
Independent Petroleum Association of America