



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

MAR 15 2007

Kameran Onley
Co-chair
U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Task Force
Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of the Deputy Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Tim Keeney
Co-chair
U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Task Force
Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere
NOAA
14th and Constitution Aves. NW
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Dear Kameran and Tim,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for us to share news on the success of the *Our Sea of Islands*, a Regional Forum for Oceania on Marine Managed Areas and World Heritage Report, held recently in Honolulu Jan. 29- Feb. 4, 2007.

As you recall, the Forum brought together participants from over 20 countries, states and territories around the Pacific and was co-sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of the Interior, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Programme. As part of the Forum, a communiqué was developed that summarizes Forum outcomes and recommends needed action to further marine protection across the region.

I would like to reiterate the commitments offered by the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) in two specific areas highlighted by the participants call for action.

With regards to the request to develop effective surveillance and enforcement capacity:

As the National Marine Sanctuary Program seeks solutions for enforcement in marine sanctuaries across the nation, we will ensure that our development of remote surveillance technology and "practical application" is suitable in other remote island sites in the Pacific. This means that we will seek an economy of scale in production that will make these tools applicable, affordable, and available to resource managers across Oceania.



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With regards to the call for action to build local capacity for scientists and resource managers across Oceania:

We plan to utilize the existing sanctuary at Fagatele Bay as a focal point or regional hub to bring together local managers and scientists to support the integration of western science and traditional ecological knowledge. This means we will find resources to bring together world class experts in science, social science, and traditional knowledge to advance local capacities for research and management. It is our intention to use Fagatele Bay as a regional hub to promote information, technology and most importantly “traditional knowledge” exchange to help build a sense of community among managers and specialists across Oceania.

Following our report at the Task Force meeting, we were encouraged by the remarks offered by the committee members to address these matters and underscore NMSP commitments.

Don Schregardus, Department of Defense, expressed an interest in using enforcement actions to support environmental education in the Pacific. I support these comments and recognize this is a unique opportunity for NOAA to work with the Navy to link regulatory actions, such as civil penalties to increase local enforcement capacity across Oceania.

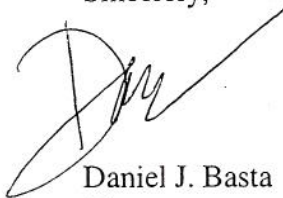
I commend the suggestion offered jointly by Barbara Best, representative of USAID, and Karen Wardzinski representative of Department of Justice that the Task Force enforcement working group consider taking up this issue. I look forward to working with members of the enforcement working group as they pursue these matters.

I would also like to recognize the statement made by acting co-chair Department of the Interior representative, David Cohen, to seek funds to support efforts to build resource management and scientific expertise at the local level.

Together, we have a unique opportunity to support and promote marine conservation in the Pacific (unquestionably the world’s most biologically diverse and culturally rich coral reef environment) while supporting and sustaining local communities.

I want to emphasize the commitments offered by the NMSP and I look forward to working with the Task Force committee in these endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Basta', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel J. Basta
Director
National Marine Sanctuary Program