



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the General Counsel
Washington, D.C. 20230

November 14, 2003

The Honorable Richard Pombo
Chairman, Committee on Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6201

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter provides you with the Department's views on H.R. 1026, entitled the *Coastal Services and Performance Evaluation Act of 2003*, introduced by Representative Jim Saxton on February 27, 2003. The Department appreciates the Committee's support for this important legislation and offers the following comments on H.R. 1026 for consideration.

The Department supports H.R. 1026, which reauthorizes coastal services, training, education, and technical support programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and establishes a performance evaluation system for these programs. The activities that the bill authorizes are all important components of the National Coastal Management Program.

However, H.R. 1026 addresses only one component of the authorized activities outlined in the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). Two other separate pieces of legislation, H.R. 1025 and H.R. 1028, also introduced in the 108th Congress, address different sections of the CZMA. As currently structured, the CZMA provides a cohesive approach towards coastal and estuarine management from the research and education that occurs at National Estuarine Research Reserves to the day-to-day implementation of Coastal Zone Management Programs. The Department is concerned with Congress's fragmented approach to reauthorization of the CZMA.

In sum, while the Department in general supports the language and intent of H.R. 1026, it strongly believes that reauthorization of the CZMA should be undertaken in a single legislative package that encompasses all facets of the CZMA as it is currently structured. The Department intends to submit a comprehensive legislative package to reauthorize the CZMA in the Second Session of the 108th Congress.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised the Department that there is no objection to the submission of this letter to the Congress from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane T. Dana".

Jane T. Dana
Deputy General Counsel