

## An Imaginary Open Letter to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

Commissioners,

As you read this, your report to the U.S. Congress, President and populace is being finalized. The numbers and statistics, alone, are impressive: thousands of hours of testimony, hundreds of pounds of papers and reports, countless staff meetings, and millions of miles of travel by you and the witnesses who have come before you. In short, your effort to collect data, information and knowledge has been Herculean ... we want to make sure it's not also Sisyphean.

We are the potential implementers of the recommendations that you may develop. You have already demonstrated a deep and careful understanding of many of those issues that we deal with on a daily basis: resource management and sustainability, hazard mitigation, governance of the oceans and coastal lands, ecosystem and public health (just to name a few), and the research and education that form the foundation of the implied capabilities therein.

You have worked well with all of us in developing the basis for your recommendations. How can we continue this relationship through the implementation of what we are sure will be some fundamental and sage directions for the future? We, the signatories, represent a set of diverse organizations with powerful tools to effect change. We sponsor research and operations, we write program requirements, we execute and enforce laws, we establish policies, we create standards, we convince policy-makers, and we market products. In short, we solve problems.

As we await your final report, many of us wonder how to position ourselves to implement your recommendations. Your charge requires that you deliver a report, but we are asking you to do more. We are asking you to work with us in establishing the roadmap for implementation. You'd be surprised how many of us are eager to take your ideas and run with them. How do we do this? Wait to receive the report in the mail, and then go our independent ways to develop solutions? I think not. Instead, a carefully crafted campaign to develop an implementation plan for your recommendations seems in order. Work with us on this. Many of us have pulled out a clean sheet of paper, and sharpened our pencils. With all due respect, your final sets of recommendations are only as good as our ability to implement them, and we're ready whenever you are to discuss the way ahead.

Signed,

- Federal, State, regional bureaucrats
- Academic researchers
- Members of non-governmental organizations
- Industry executives and stockholders
- International community of oceanographers

## OCEANOGRAPHY

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