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# Our Nation's New National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes

FROM THE GREAT LAKES TO THE EVERGLADES, FROM THE Aleutian archipelago to the Chesapeake Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, the United States is endowed with a rich array of coastal and marine ecosystems. Stewardship of these precious resources is a national priority.

Until recently, however, our Nation lacked a comprehensive policy for assuring the sustainability of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. In the absence of a coordinated framework in support of national priorities, Federal departments and agencies acted independently, implementing a maze of over 100 different laws, policies, and regulations related to these resources. The result was inefficiency, waste, and sometimes conflict.

Now the Nation has set sail on a new course. Last year, after a year of preparatory work by the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, President Obama signed Executive Order 13547 establishing our Nation's first comprehensive, integrated National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes (National Ocean Policy). The Executive Order adopted the Task Force's final recommendations and directed Federal agencies to implement them under the guidance of a newly created Cabinet-level National Ocean Council, which we co-chair.

The National Ocean Policy is especially critical today for addressing growing demands on the use of ocean space and resources while at the same time addressing the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification, and catastrophic natural and human-caused events. As co-chairs of the National Ocean Council, we will work to further the long-term health, productivity, and resiliency of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes in the face of human activity and climate change in ways that advance human health and well being, economic prosperity, social justice, and national security. Successful implementation of the National Ocean Policy will help ensure that future generations can enjoy healthy and productive oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, and the economies and communities they support.

The National Ocean Policy does not restrict or regulate any ocean, coastal, or Great Lake use or activity. Rather, it establishes a multi-year process and begins a conversation with the American public and stakeholders about how the Nation can advance its environmental, social, and economic interests through sustainable and

## National Ocean Policy Priority Objectives

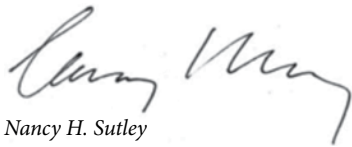
1. Ecosystem-Based Management
2. Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning
3. Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding
4. Coordinate and Support Federal, State, Tribal, Local, and Regional Resource Management
5. Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification
6. Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration
7. Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land
8. Changing Conditions in the Arctic
9. Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations, Mapping, and Infrastructure

productive practices. There are numerous opportunities for the public to participate in the implementation of the National Ocean Policy, including in the development of strategic action plans for priority objectives (see text box) and regional coastal and marine spatial plans. The National Ocean Council will seek public participation through workshops, town halls, public hearings, and public comment processes, among other opportunities.

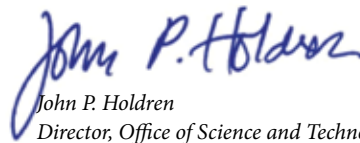
The President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request calls for new funding and investments across many Federal agencies to advance National Ocean Policy activities. We are confident that making these investments will advance the economic interests of the United States, improve efficiencies across the Federal Government, and help ensure the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts and the Great Lakes for future generations.

The National Ocean Council website offers information about how stakeholders and the public can participate in National Ocean Policy implementation. Please visit us at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans>.

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to ensure the success of our Nation's first comprehensive National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes.



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