

**American Bird Conservancy • Clean Water Action • Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice • Environment America • Environmental Defense Fund • Greenpeace • League of
Conservation Voters • National Audubon Society • National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council • Oceana • Ocean Conservancy
Pew Environment Group • Sierra Club • The Wilderness Society • World Wildlife Fund**

February 19, 2010

President Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the millions of members of our organizations, we commend your leadership in directing the development of a national policy to protect, maintain and restore the health of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems. We write now to urge you to issue an Executive Order that formally establishes such a policy, a means for coordinated implementation of that policy, including through individual agency actions and an interagency national oceans council, and an effective framework for coastal and marine spatial planning.

The recommendation to establish a national ocean policy was made by two bipartisan national commissions, the congressionally-established U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. These commissions recognized that our oceans are held in trust for both current and future generations of Americans, that they are in serious trouble, and that improved stewardship is needed if these valuable resources are to continue to sustain us now and in the future.

Our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are not just places of wonder and beauty -- they are economic engines that provide valuable jobs, food, renewable energy resources, ecosystem services, recreation and tourism opportunities. Protecting our oceans is a vital means of protecting and restoring our economy and jobs.

Oceans help to regulate our climate and generate over half the oxygen we breathe. Our ocean and coastal waters provide habitat for an incredible array of fish and wildlife. These waters have been central to our way of life as a maritime nation for generations. Healthy oceans, coasts and communities represent our heritage and our future.

Your June 12th memo states that “[w]e have a stewardship responsibility to maintain healthy, resilient, and sustainable oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes resources for the benefit of this and future generations.” Issuance of an Executive Order that formally adopts the recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force and that strengthens stewardship of these resources would represent a great step forward. Specifically, we respectfully ask that this Executive Order formally establish a national ocean policy to protect, maintain, and restore ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes health, task Federal agencies with implementing this policy, create an interagency national ocean council to tackle key challenges and priorities, and outline a framework for coastal and marine spatial planning to ensure that development proceeds in a manner that will maintain our oceans and marine resources for generations to come.

Again, we thank you for your leadership and urge you to issue an Executive Order that will protect, maintain and restore our ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems for the millions of Americans who use, enjoy and depend upon these valuable resources.

Sincerely,

Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Vikki N. Spruill
President and CEO
Ocean Conservancy

Trip Van Noppen
President
Earthjustice

Rodger Schlickeisen
President and CEO
Defenders of Wildlife

Larry Schweiger
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation

Margie Alt
Executive Director
Environment America

John DeCock
President & CEO
Clean Water Action

Joshua S. Reichert
Managing Director
Pew Environment Group

Frank Gill
President
National Audubon Society

Carter Roberts
President and CEO
World Wildlife Fund

Andrew F. Sharpless
Chief Executive Officer
Oceana

Bill Meadows
President
The Wilderness Society

Phil Radford
Executive Director
Greenpeace

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

Carl Pope
Executive Director
Sierra Club

George H. Fenwick
President
American Bird Conservancy

Fred Krupp
President
Environmental Defense Fund