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Obama Administration Releases Plan to Promote Ocean Economy and Resilience

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Obama Administration Releases Plan to Promote Ocean Economy and Resilience

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, the Obama Administration released its final plan for translating the National Ocean Policy into on-the-ground actions to benefit the American people. With significant public input from a wide spectrum of individuals and interests, the final Implementation Plan focuses on improving coordination to speed Federal permitting decisions; better manage the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources that drive so much of our economy; develop and disseminate sound scientific information that local communities, industries, and decision-makers can use; and collaborate more effectively with State, Tribal, and local partners, marine industries, and other stakeholders. Without creating any new regulations or authorities, the plan will ensure the many Federal agencies involved in ocean management work together to reduce duplication and red tape and use taxpayer dollars more efficiently.

"This plan embodies the type of efficient, collaborative government that taxpayers, communities, and businesses expect from their Federal Government," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality and Co-Chair of the National Ocean Council. "With increasing demands on our ocean, we must improve how we work together, share information, and plan smartly to grow our economy, keep our ocean healthy, and enjoy the highest benefits from our ocean resources, now and in the future."

"Science is the foundation upon which sound management of ocean and coastal resources is based," said John P. Holdren, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and Co-Chair of the National Ocean Council. "The President's National Ocean Policy and the new implementation plan will help advance relevant science and its application to decision-making to strengthen the economies of our coastal regions while increasing their resilience and sustaining their resources."

Our oceans and coasts support tens of millions of jobs and contribute trillions of dollars a year to the national economy through tourism, development, commercial fishing, recreational fishing and boating, energy, shipping, and other activities. Competition for increasingly vulnerable ocean resources is growing, presenting challenges for Federal agencies that follow and enforce more than 100 ocean-related laws. The final Implementation Plan describes specific actions Federal agencies will take to address key ocean challenges, give states and communities greater input in Federal decisions, streamline Federal operations, save taxpayer dollars, and promote economic growth, including:

- Providing better forecasting of ocean conditions and events to protect beachgoers and consumers from threats to their health and safety;
- Sharing more and better data about severe storms and sea level rise, which will help coastal communities prepare for threats;
- Supporting voluntary regional marine planning based on regional and local priorities;
- Improving the Federal permitting process to save time and money for ocean-based industries and taxpayers, while protecting health, safety, and the environment;
- Restoring important habitats that protect communities and support healthy ocean resources; and
- Improving our capability to predict conditions and prevent negative impacts as activity in the Arctic increases.

The final Plan incorporates suggestions from the significant public input received on the draft, including key support for local and regional capacity and self-determination, and the development of more and better information related to ocean conditions. The Plan specifies that regional stakeholders will determine the scope, scale and content of collaborative marine planning, that participation is voluntary, and that regional planning bodies will be established only in regions that want them. It also recognizes the broad interests in the Arctic in national security, domestic energy and

natural resources, and environmental and cultural sustainability as it becomes more accessible due to climate change. Under the Plan, agencies will work together to address challenges in the Arctic region, focusing on data management, accurate mapping and charting, sea-ice forecasting, and readiness for environmental incident response.

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The National Ocean Policy, established by Executive Order on July 19, 2010, created a National Ocean Council consisting of 27 Federal agencies and departments, providing a venue for agencies to work together cooperatively, share information, and streamline decision-making. The Council developed the Implementation Plan over the past two years with extensive input from national, regional, and local stakeholders from all marine sectors; tribal, State, and local governments; the private sector, scientists, and the public.

To read the Implementation Plan, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.

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