



National Ocean Policy Ensures Economic Growth, Security, and Resilience

Effective Coordination Among Interested Groups Is Crucial

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Last year President Barack Obama announced the first National Ocean Policy and the creation of a National Ocean Council tasked with its implementation, pursuant to Executive Order 13547. Contrary to attempts to color the policy as restrictive “ocean zoning,” a comprehensive, collaborative approach to managing our ocean resources will help prevent multiuse conflicts, increase efficiency, and ensure ocean economies continue to support American jobs and a high quality of life. The National Ocean Council should be given the necessary support to implement the National Ocean Policy for the benefit of American jobs, economic growth, and security.

A keystone recommendation of the National Ocean Policy, or NOP, is support for comprehensive ocean planning, or COP. The concept, technically known as coastal and marine spatial planning, recognizes that as new potential uses of ocean space become increasingly viable, our exclusive economic zone—the area of ocean space extending out to 200 miles from our shores—will grow more crowded. Thus, in order to ensure efficient prioritization of these uses and to reduce conflicts, managers should solicit input from stakeholders upfront rather than allowing a first-come, first-served land grab mentality to dictate how our invaluable ocean resources will be managed.

Contrary to efforts to portray this policy as a hyper-regulatory economic anchor, the principles contained in the NOP actually pave the way for a more efficient, forward-thinking approach that will benefit both new and existing uses of ocean space. Meanwhile, the status quo is a cart-before-the-horse approach that will eliminate certainty, reduce likelihood of private investment, and delay development with an endless stream of lawsuits.

Comprehensive NOP will increase government efficiency, enable sound management of government resources, and spend taxpayer dollars wisely

- The institution of a National Ocean Policy and implementation of COP was a cornerstone recommendation of both the independent Pew Oceans Commission, chaired by current Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy,

appointed by President George W. Bush. Both commissions called for harmonizing the responsibilities of the 27 different federal agencies with jurisdiction over some aspect of ocean management.

- A June report by the nonpartisan Joint Ocean Commission, comprised of members of both the Pew and U.S. Ocean Commissions, expressed strong ongoing support for COP and the NOP, suggesting, “the current sector-by-sector management system is incapable of providing the integrated, comprehensive, and flexible approach needed to ensure that conflicts among proposed uses are minimized and potential benefits enhanced.”
- Strategic planning maximizes organizational efficiency and use of taxpayer dollars. Contrary to the false depiction of the NOP as excessive government regulation, it will bring all interested parties to the table before key management decisions are made. This will improve opportunities for community and citizen participation in the planning process and facilitate sustainable economic growth by providing transparency and predictability for economic investments. The alternative is allowing developers of individual projects to drive the regulatory process without adequate guidance from regulators or input from alternate stakeholders, a process that has been shown to lead to a seemingly endless string of lawsuits, political quagmires, and a poisonous investment climate. (see sidebar)

Permitting in absence of Comprehensive Ocean Planning

A timeline of the Cape Wind offshore wind project

July 2001: Cape Wind Associates announces plans to construct a 170-turbine wind farm in federal waters of Nantucket Sound off Massachusetts.

November 2002: A federal judge rules against opposition groups and allows Cape Wind to construct a data tower on the site.

November 2004: Operating under jurisdiction granted in the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues a favorable environmental review of the project.

February 2005: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declares the Army Corps’ review “inadequate.”

August 2005: Congress passes the Energy Policy Act of 2005, granting the Department of the Interior’s Minerals Management Service

(now the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Regulation and Enforcement) authority to manage renewable energy facilities on the outer continental shelf. Interior pledges to do its own review of the project.

January 2009: The Minerals Management Service completes its environmental assessment, finding the project will have “negligible” to “minor” impact on wildlife, tourism, and navigation.

February 2009: The Federal Aviation Authority finds the project will present a “presumed hazard” to air traffic.

October 2009: Two Native American tribes push for Nantucket Sound to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, an action that would prevent construction of the project.

April 2010: Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announces federal approval of the Cape Wind project.

April 2011: Salazar announces approval for Cape Wind’s construction and operations plan.

May 2011: Department of Energy places Cape Wind’s application for a federal loan guarantee “on hold.”

More than a decade after inception, and more than 20 years after the first offshore wind turbine was installed in Denmark, the United States has yet to begin construction on an offshore wind farm. Meanwhile, more than 6,000 megawatts of generation capacity are installed or under construction in other parts of the world.

*Dates through April 2010 courtesy of *The Boston Globe*.

Marine spatial planning is already working

Several states, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Oregon, have already implemented COP at the state level. They have taken proactive steps to identify areas most suitable for various commercial and recreational uses of ocean space, including fishing, energy development, sand and gravel mining, shipping traffic, conservation, recreation, and other activities. These efforts ensure the relative benefits of each action are considered and prioritized to meet economic, environmental, security, and social goals.

In addition to their in-state work, Rhode Island and Massachusetts cooperated on a landmark agreement for the development of offshore wind energy. Announcing the agreement, former Rhode Island governor, Republican Don Carcieri, said, “The shared waters between Rhode Island and Massachusetts hold the key to the future of offshore wind developments along the East Coast and the country. It is in the best interest for both states to work together to expedite the federal permitting process through this collaborative effort. We share mutual interests in developing offshore wind projects, bringing greater economic development activity and economic security to the region.”

At the federal level, the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement, or BOEMRE, has applied the principles of COP in its “Smart from the Start” initiative to streamline offshore wind permitting. Instead of waiting for developers to request permitting, this program is in the process of designating wind energy areas in federal waters in the northeast and mid-Atlantic. BOEMRE has taken input from other federal agencies and local stakeholders while designating these areas, and amended their initial proposals—reducing the size of the area proposed to be opened for development off the coast of Massachusetts by nearly 50 percent after receiving input from the fishing industry.

National Ocean Policy will preserve the health of oceans and the local economies they support

- In addition to supporting COP, the National Ocean Policy contains eight other national priority objectives, including the establishment of a science-based strategy to align conservation and restoration goals at federal, state, tribal, local, and regional levels and the strengthening and integration of federal and nonfederal ocean observing systems and data management into one national system, to then be integrated into international observation efforts.
- Our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are critical components of our nation’s economy. U.S. coastal counties are home to more than half of all Americans, generate an estimated \$8 trillion per year, and support 69 million jobs.

- Tourism, recreation, and fishing contributed \$18.9 billion to Florida’s GDP in 2005. In addition to the benefits the entire nation will reap from implementation of the nine priority objectives in the NOP, Florida’s coast is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise as a result of global climate change, and its reefs are at significant risk from ocean warming and acidification. The NOP’s goals include strengthening resiliency of coastal communities to these threats.
- As of 2007 more than 85 percent of California’s gross domestic product and nearly 12 million jobs came from economic activity in these coastal estuarine areas. California’s state government has prioritized ocean conservation and has used the concept of COP in implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act, which used stakeholder input to develop the boundaries of marine protected areas within its state waters.
- And in Michigan, a state deeply affected by the economic downturn, 15 percent of all jobs are associated with the Great Lakes, and they make up 23 percent of the total payroll. While some would imply that the administration is over-reaching its authority by extending ocean policy to the Great Lakes, the core missions of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, BOEMRE, and other federal agencies with oversight of ocean activities already encompass the Great Lakes. This is appropriate as activities on the Lakes, including fishing, boating, shipping, and energy development, are equivalent to their maritime counterparts.
- Declining ocean health and a lack of effective coordination among regional groups, states, and federal bodies is putting this great economic engine at risk. Wise investment in the future of our oceans will provide a tune-up for our marine economic engine that will keep it running smoothly for future generations. On the other hand, failing to address these inadequacies will inevitably prove disastrous.

National Ocean Policy answers a national security and economic imperative

- Voicing U.S. Navy support for the president’s Ocean Policy Task Force, Rear Adm. Herman Shelanski emphasized, “The U.S. Navy is committed to being responsible stewards of the environment. As such, we understand the importance of developing a new national ocean policy—one that includes ecosystem-based coastal and marine spatial planning and management in the United States. ... we also believe such management should be balanced to maintain and enhance multiple ocean uses, including those that contribute to our nation’s security and global stability.”
- Comprehensive ocean planning will ensure the stability of the nation’s seaports as additional uses of ocean space evolve. This is of utmost importance to the entire country. The value of imports through U.S. ports was almost \$2 trillion in 2010, and in 2008

commercial ports supported 13 million U.S. jobs. Ports that accommodate oceangoing vessels move 99.5 percent of U.S. overseas trade by volume and 64 percent by value, and compared to 2001 total freight moving through U.S. ports is expected to increase by more than 50 percent by 2020.

Coordination begets efficiency; its absence leads to chaos

America's oceans are effectively our last frontier. And while they comprise federally managed space, the bulk of their users live and work in adjacent coastal areas. Thus our exclusive economic zone presents a unique regulatory challenge. We have seen how the policies of the past—a first-come, first-served race to plant a flag—lead to chaos and delay. Lack of certainty means a lack of financing. A lack of financing means a lack of economic growth. And a lack of growth means a lack of jobs. Until we can create a process that brings all stakeholders to the table to air grievances and share solutions, we will continue to stagger along in a series of fits, starts, and lawsuits that will leave America's ocean industries falling farther and farther behind our international counterparts.

Support for the National Ocean Policy is support for the future of America's ocean industries.