

**The Joint Ocean  
Commission Initiative  
Leadership Council**

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William Ruckelshaus

The Honorable  
Norman Mineta

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Co-Chairs**

Admiral James D.  
Watkins, U.S. Navy  
(Retired)

The Honorable Leon E.  
Panetta

US House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
Washington DC, 20515

May 4, 2012

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Wolf, and Ranking Members Dicks and Fattah,

As Co-Chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, which promotes and maintains momentum on the important work of the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, we are writing to urge you to reject any amendment that may be offered to the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill that would restrict or prohibit funds from being used to implement the National Ocean Policy pursuant to Executive Order #13547.

It has been well documented that the decline of ocean ecosystems results in large part from decades of uncoordinated, sector-based management of these resources, which is at the heart of what the National Ocean Policy seeks to address.

We are also concerned that, while an amendment may be intended to prohibit funding for agency actions directly resulting from the executive order, depending on how it is crafted it could have much broader implications for the critical federal role in managing, monitoring and restoring ocean and coastal resources, including fisheries.

If fully and properly implemented, the National Ocean Policy will ensure that our ocean ecosystems are healthy, resilient, and capable of providing high-quality American jobs and the important goods and services that the American people want and need now and in the future. The establishment of coordinated ocean management and science under a National Ocean Policy was called for by leaders in the governmental, academic, business, and environmental communities for decades. Recommending bodies included the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, the Pew Oceans Commission, and, since 2005, the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative.

The National Ocean Policy recognizes that ocean ecosystem health is interconnected with the productivity of ocean-related sectors of the economy and society. While establishment of the National Ocean Policy is a major step forward, the coordination structures and tools needed to effectively implement the policy are still in their infancy. Success will require strong commitment and support from America's leaders at all levels. It will also require adequate funding and should be prioritized by your committees, even in this time of economic challenges and fiscal austerity.

It is essential that, as this policy is developed and implemented, all affected sectors, levels of government, and citizens be given a clear opportunity to voice concerns and help shape the

policy as it moves forward. In this era of shrinking budgets at all levels of government, it is perhaps more urgent than ever that federal programs be coordinated and efficient in their efforts to assist states and regions in achieving critical resource management goals for our oceans and coasts. Too much of the US economy depends on getting this right.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative remains dedicated to helping you and other U.S. leaders focus on ocean policy priorities that will ensure that our oceans and coasts are managed effectively and efficiently going forward and achieve important economic, environmental, and societal goals.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Ruckelshaus".

William Ruckelshaus  
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Norman Mineta".

Norman Mineta  
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative