

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

In light of the recent announcement made by President Trump to revoke the National Ocean Policy (NOP) and put in place a Trump Ocean Policy, we urge you to hold an oversight hearing in the Natural Resources Committee to examine the implications of this new policy. The purpose of the original NOP was to enhance our ability to maintain healthy, resilient, and sustainable ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources for present and future generations.¹ We are concerned that the new Executive Order is short-sighted and backs away from that commitment and will overturn years of critical ocean planning and policy.

Healthy oceans are important from an ecological standpoint, but they are also central to the livelihoods of millions of Americans. In 2015, the U.S. ocean and Great Lakes economy accounted for \$320 billion in gross domestic product.² Unfortunately, the oceans face significant threats, including illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, harmful algal blooms, marine debris, overfishing, and more.

The NOP served as a policy framework to address these issues, along with identifying ways to deal with competing uses, ocean permitting, national security, and shipping. The 106th Congress passed “The Oceans Act of 2000,” which created the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP). After consulting hundreds of stakeholders and scientists, the USCOP published a final report³ in 2004 including 212 recommendations for a comprehensive and coordinated national ocean policy. In December 2004, the Bush Administration formally responded to the recommendations of the USCOP by submitting to Congress the *U.S. Ocean Action Plan*. In June 2009, the Obama Administration established an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force that developed formal recommendations. In 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13547 to adopt the recommendations of the Task Force.

¹ “Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.” The White House Council on Environmental Quality. July 19, 2010.

² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office for Coastal Management. 2018. “NOAA Report on the U.S. Ocean and Great Lakes Economy.” Charleston, SC: NOAA Office for Coastal Management. Available at <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/econ-report.pdf>

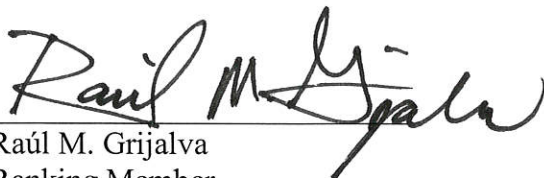
³ An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century, 2004. Available at: <http://www.oceancommission.gov/>

These recommendations included establishing a National Ocean Policy to protect, maintain, and restore the health of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources; establishing a National Ocean Council (NOC) to strengthen and better coordinate ocean governance across the Federal government; creating implementation strategies to pursue nine priority objectives; and providing a framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning. Since the release of the Implementation Plan, federal agencies have made tremendous progress in carrying out these actions.⁴ The original NOP has helped move initiatives forward that improve the ocean economy, safety and security of ocean and coastal activities, and coastal and ocean resilience.

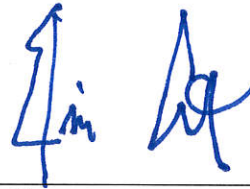
President Trump is unilaterally throwing out many components of the NOP and the decades of work and input from Congress, two previous Administrations, policy experts, and the American public that went into its creation. This important topic deserves our attention and oversight. This Committee demonstrated significant interest in the NOP, holding several hearings and advancing legislation on this topic in previous Congresses; the Committee should resume this work.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources




Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



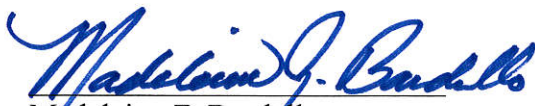
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

⁴ Report on the Implementation of the National Ocean Policy (2015). Available at:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nop_highlights_annual_report_final_-_150310.pdf