

National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan Fact Sheet

As part of President Obama's *National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*, on January 12, 2012, the National Ocean Council released a draft *National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan* to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. The draft *Implementation Plan* describes more than 50 actions the Federal Government will take to improve the health of the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes, which support tens of millions of jobs, contribute trillions of dollars a year to the national economy, and are essential to public health and national security. The plan will be available for 45 days of public comment.

What Is the Implementation Plan?

The draft *Implementation Plan* will ensure the Federal Government targets limited resources more effectively to deliver demonstrable results for the American people, including predictability for users, more efficient and coordinated decision-making, and improved sharing of data and technology. For each action, the plan outlines key milestones, identifies responsible agencies, and indicates the expected timeframe for completion.

Actions include:

Improve permitting. The Federal agencies of the National Ocean Council will work together to better coordinate their permitting processes, with an initial focus on improving aquaculture permitting. A more coordinated and consistent process will eliminate unnecessary delays and burdens for applicants, and more effectively protect the health of the ocean.

Provide scientific information to support emerging sustainable uses of resources including for fisheries, renewable energy, aquaculture, and biotechnology. The National Ocean Council will increase access to data and information to provide new and expanded opportunities for sustainable economic growth in traditional and emerging sectors—including renewable energy, aquaculture, and biotechnology. Private industry, government agencies, and partners can benefit from improved scientific information and services to make better informed decisions about the feasibility and optimization of operations for economically and ecologically sustainable uses of ocean and coastal resources.

Observe and forecast Arctic sea ice. Continued rapid loss of sea ice is the most urgent ocean issue in the Arctic region. Agencies will improve daily to weekly sea ice models and forecasts and new seasonal prediction services for the Arctic region to improve safe ship operation and navigation through Arctic waters, support homeland and national security, benefit community and subsistence activities, and help better manage protected marine resources.

Locate, control, and, where possible, eradicate invasive species populations. Federal agencies will work together and with State and local partners to promote and coordinate actions to locate, monitor, control, and, where possible, eradicate invasive species populations.

Improve water quality by reducing the impacts of trash, marine debris, and sources of excess nutrients, sediments, pollutants, and pathogens. Pollution to streams, rivers, estuaries, and coasts is a significant cause of declining ocean and coastal ecosystem health. Agencies will identify and implement conservation and best management practices, and promote voluntary partnership programs with stakeholders to reduce rural and urban sources of pollution.

Support vulnerable coastal communities in addressing impacts of climate change on infrastructure and economies. Understanding the vulnerabilities of coastal communities and their economies enables local decision-makers and stakeholders to reduce the risks and impacts of a changing climate, and make appropriate investments in infrastructure, public health, and economic development. Federal agencies will improve the quality and accessibility of information for Federal, State and local decision-makers on the vulnerability of coastal and ocean communities and environments.

How was the Implementation Plan developed?

The Implementation Plan was developed with significant input from national, regional, and local stakeholders and the general public. The National Ocean Council sought public comment from January through April 2011 and June through July 2011, and held 12 regional listening sessions around the country. In addition, the Governance Coordinating Committee, composed of State, Tribal, and local government officials, and the Ocean Research Advisory Panel, composed of expert representatives from a range of ocean sectors, provided input for the plan.

Next Steps

The draft *Implementation Plan* is available for public comment through February 27, 2012 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans>. The National Ocean Council will review and incorporate comments before finalizing the Plan in 2012. The Plan will be reviewed annually and modified as needed based on new information or changing conditions.