The oceans, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are a vital source of jobs, food, recreation, transportation, and energy resources in the United States. Yet the same oceans and coasts on which we depend are home to more than half of the Nation’s population and face enormous environmental challenges. The United States needs to act within a unifying framework under a clear national policy, including a comprehensive, ecosystem-based framework for the long-term conservation and use of our resources.

In order better to meet our Nation’s stewardship responsibilities for our oceans, coasts, and the Great Lakes, President Obama issued a June 12, 2009 memorandum to establish an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, led by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Task Force is composed of senior policy-level officials from federal executive departments, agencies, and offices. The President has asked the Task Force to develop the following recommendations:

- A national policy for our oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes;
- A framework for policy coordination to improve ocean stewardship;
- An implementation strategy to meet the objectives of the national policy; and
- A framework for coastal and marine spatial planning.

As the Task Force develops these recommendations, it builds on the extensive work of the previous U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. These commissions benefitted from wide-spread public input. The Task Force has also engaged the public as it develops recommendations for the President. The Task Force has convened 24 expert round tables so far and is holding several regional public meetings to gather broad-based regional and public input. We want to hear from everyone with a stake in the health of our oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes. The time frame for providing recommendations to the President is ambitious, but by working together we can deliver effective solutions to protect our natural resources.

We welcome your comments on the recommendations requested by President Obama, as well as on any emerging issues for our oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes that you believe the Task Force should consider.

To provide written comments to the Task Force, please visit our Web site at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/
Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force

Task Force Chair
White House Council on Environmental Quality
Nancy Sutley, Chair

Department of Agriculture
Robert Bonnie
Senior Advisor to the Secretary

Department of Commerce
Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere
NOAA Administrator

Department of Defense
Admiral James Houck
Judge Advocate General of the Navy

Environmental Protection Agency
Pete Silva
Assistant Administrator for Water

Department of Energy
David Sandalow
Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs

Federal Energy Regulatory Committee
John Katz
Deputy Associate General Counsel

Department of Health and Human Services
Dora Hughes
Counselor for Science & Public Health

Department of Homeland Security
Admiral Thad Allen
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

Department of the Interior
Laura Davis
Associate Deputy Secretary

Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Major General Darren McDew
Vice Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff

Department of Justice
John Cruden
Acting Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources Division

Department of Labor
Megan Uzzell
Senior Advisor to the Secretary

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Dr. Michael Freilich
Director of the Earth Science Division

National Security Council
Ed Fendley
Director for International Environmental Issues

National Science Foundation
Timothy Killeen
Assistant Director for the Geosciences

Department of the Navy
Robert Work
Under Secretary of the Navy

Department of State
David Balton
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries

Department of Transportation
Katie Thomson
Counselor to the Secretary of Transportation

Office of the Vice President
Terrell McSweeney
Deputy Assistant to VP & Domestic Policy Advisor

White House Office of Energy and Climate Change
Jody Freeman
Counselor for Energy and Climate

White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Michael Fitzpatrick
Associate Administrator

White House Office of Management and Budget
Sally Ericsson
Associate Director for Natural Resource Programs

White House Office of Management and Budget
Xavier Briggs
Associate Director for General Government Programs

White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
Shere Abbott
Associate Director of Environment