

**Defenders of Wildlife ♦ Earthjustice ♦ Environment America ♦
Friends of the Earth ♦ League of Conservation Voters ♦
Natural Resources Defense Council ♦ Ocean Conservancy ♦ Oceana ♦
Pew Environment Group ♦ Physicians for Social Responsibility ♦ Sierra Club ♦
World Wildlife Fund**

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of
Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear House and Senate Leaders:

On behalf of the millions of members of our organizations, we write in support of the National Ocean Policy, adopted in Presidential Executive Order No. 13547 (July 2010), and in strong opposition to the inclusion of any funding prohibition or restriction on the implementation of this policy in any appropriations bills.

Healthy oceans and coasts are a vital part of a healthy U.S. economy. The area of ocean controlled by the United States is greater than the country's total land mass, and our ocean economy contributes more economic output than the entire farm sector

Coordinating ocean management and science under a National Ocean Policy has been called for by leaders in the governmental, academic, business and environmental communities for decades. The recommendation to establish a National Ocean Policy was made initially by two bipartisan national commissions, the congressionally-established U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, chaired by Admiral James D. Watkins, U.S. Navy (Retired), and the Pew Oceans Commission, chaired by the Honorable Leon Panetta. Both commissions found that our oceans are held in trust for all Americans, that ocean health is important to the country's economy and that improved stewardship through a comprehensive and unifying national policy is urgently needed.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, co-chaired by the Honorable William Ruckelshaus and Norman Mineta, echoed this call in its recent report *America's Ocean Future* and recommended that Congress invest in the ocean economy by funding implementation of the National Ocean Policy. *Any funding prohibition or limitation on implementation of the National Ocean Policy would go directly against this recommendation and against the overwhelming recommendations made on a bi-partisan basis over the last decade.*

The National Ocean Policy improves the way we manage our oceans, reducing duplicative efforts and conflicting government actions, and focusing attention on the most serious issues jeopardizing ocean health. The National Ocean Policy does not replace or override existing statutes, or alter the jurisdiction

of any agency, but instead, with oversight and coordination from the National Ocean Council, brings order to the chaos that has resulted from ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources being governed by more than 140 laws and 20 different agencies. The National Ocean Policy is designed to engage federal agencies with regional, state and tribal initiatives to plan for the increasing demands on the ocean, with the goals of avoiding conflicts among different uses, protecting the health of ocean ecosystems, and providing greater certainty to industry.

We thank you for your leadership and urge you to resist efforts to restrict or delay the implementation of this important national policy.

Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

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Managing Director
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Defenders of Wildlife

Erich Pica
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Michael Brune
Executive Director
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