

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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

**RE: Support smart ocean planning for our coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems.**

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Democratic Leader Reid,

We are writing to express our strong support for ocean planning efforts that are underway in regions around the country. This year, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions will finalize regional ocean plans, and the West Coast, Caribbean and Pacific Islands regions have planning processes well underway. In addition to these regional efforts, multiple individual states are also developing ocean plans for their state waters, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Washington, Connecticut and Oregon.

Regional ocean planning efforts have emerged from the ground up, with their roots in state sponsored partnerships. This science-based and data-driven process provides a tool for stakeholders and government to cooperatively solve problems. Ocean planning provides improved information and cross-sector engagement that can help identify and resolve potential conflicts early, helping decision makers in the private and public sectors to do their jobs better. This improves outcomes for everyone, supporting a healthy ocean and vibrant economy.

In recent years, however, legislative provisions attempting to undermine regional ocean planning have been repeatedly inserted in a variety of legislation, particularly appropriation bills. These provisions attack both ocean planning itself and the National Ocean Policy, Executive Order 13547, that ensures federal agencies come to the table as partners with the states and regions that elect to voluntarily

create ocean plans. These legislative provisions are misguided and would only undermine our ability to bring the best information and the right people together to make smarter decisions for the economy, our communities, and the environment. **We strongly object to these provisions and urge you to oppose inclusion of any anti-ocean planning or anti-National Ocean Policy provision or rider in legislation moving through the United States Congress.**

In order for ocean planning efforts to succeed, federal agencies have to do their part. Legislative attacks on ocean planning most commonly come in the form of riders that would arbitrarily restrict a federal agency's participation in regional ocean planning activities. These attacks threaten to weaken efforts to connect multiple federal agencies with each other and with state, tribal, local, and business stakeholders to share information on current and planned ocean uses, collect better ocean data, and efficiently coordinate decision-making. Without this kind of coordination we see duplicative and conflicting processes among agencies and states and uncertainty among ocean-based industries that can increase the time and money required for project development. The bottom line is that these legislative attacks interfere with federal agency participation in voluntary, coordinated, regional efforts that are enhancing ocean and coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems. **Accordingly, we urge you to reject any legislative provision or rider that would obstruct federal agency participation in regional ocean planning or the National Ocean Policy.**

Sincerely,

**National**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| American Littoral Society            | Mangrove Action Project                                  |
| Blue Frontier                        | Marine Conservation Institute                            |
| Chamber of Shipping of America       | National Boating Federation                              |
| Consortium for Ocean Leadership      | National Parks Conservation Association                  |
| Cox Maritime                         | Nature Abounds   |
| Earthjustice                         | Natural Resources Defense Council                        |
| Endangered Species Coalition         | North American Marine Environment Protection Association |
| Friends of the Earth                 | Ocean Conservancy  |
| Friends of the National Ocean Policy | Ocean Conservation Research                              |
| Greenpeace                           | Ocean River Institute                                    |
| Hands Across the Sand                | Oceana   |
| Interfaith Oceans                    | Sailors for the Sea                                      |
| League of Conservation Voters        | Save Our Shores  |

Sea to Table

Shark Stewards

Surfrider Foundation

The Wilderness Society

Wild Oceans

WILDCOAST

Wildlife Conservation Society

### **Regional**

Center for Chesapeake Communities

Conservation Law Foundation

East Coast Shellfish Growers Association

Gulf Restoration Network

New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance

Northeast Marine Pilots Association

Northwest Watershed Institute

Markian Melnyk

President

Atlantic Grid Development LLC

### **Alaska**

Alaska Wilderness League

### **California**

AZUL

Endangered Habitats League

Environmental Defense Center

Ocean Defenders Alliance

The Otter Project

Waitt Foundation

Waitt Institute

Richard Charter

Coastal Coordination Program

The Ocean Foundation

Marilyn O'Neill

Founder & CEO

Nautilus Environmental

Marc Shargel

Sea Life Photographer and Author

Living Sea Images

Dawn Wright, Ph.D.

Chief Scientist

Environmental Systems Research Institute

### **Colorado**

Colorado Ocean Coalition

### **Connecticut**

Connecticut Ornithological Association

Mystic Aquarium

Mary Ann Horrigan

NESS Program Director

New England Science & Sailing Foundation

Marcia Wilkins

Conservation Chair

Connecticut Sierra Club

### **Delaware**

Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware

Captain Stephen A. Roberts

Pilot

Delaware Bay and River

**Florida**

The Snook & Gamefish Foundation

Rosalind Jester, Ph.D.  
Florida SouthWestern State College  
Marine Science Faculty

Edward Schwerin  
Political Science Professor  
Florida Atlantic University

Scott Sheckman  
Owner  
NationalOceanPolicy.org

**Hawaii**

Marjorie Ziegler  
Executive Director  
Conservation Council for Hawai'i

**Louisiana**

Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe

**Maine**

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

Island Institute

SeaKeeper

Ryan Beaumont, P.E.  
Principal Engineer  
R. M. Beaumont Corp.

Allyson Cavaretta  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
Meadowmere Resort  
Ogunquit's Environmental Leader

Christopher Mayo  
Town of Wells Harbormaster

Richard C. Nelson  
Captain F/V Pescadero  
Maine Regional Ocean Planning Advisory  
Group

Susan Little Olcott

Sydney Roberts Rockefeller

Paul Williamson  
Development Manager  
Apex Clean Energy

**Maryland**

1000 Friends of Maryland

Jworld Annapolis

Maryland Academy of Sciences

John H. Dunnigan  
Sailor and Grandfather

Mark Eustis  
Managing Partner  
Grey Owl Analytics, LLC

Michael Grimes  
S/V Blue Chip

Daniel Trott  
Owner and Founder  
Maritime Sector Solutions, LLC

**Massachusetts**

Alewives Anonymous

Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association

Richard F. Delaney  
President & C.E.O.  
Center for Coastal Studies

Lindsay Hirt  
Marine Biologist and Wildlife Naturalist  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy

Les Kaufman  
Professor of Biology,  
Boston University Marine Program and  
Marine Conservation Fellow,  
Betty and Gordon Moore Center for Science  
and Oceans at Conservation International

Ted Maney  
Biology Department  
NEMAC Cat Cove Marine Lab  
Salem State University

Megan Ottens-Sargent  
BOEM Federal Task Force, for Aquinnah, MA  
Chair, MV Water Alliance

Tedd Saunders  
CEO, EcoLogical Solutions Inc.  
& CSO, The Saunders Hotel Group

Kevin D. E. Stokesbury, Ph.D.  
School for Marine Science and Technology  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

#### **New Hampshire**

Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation  
  
Seacoast Science Center

#### **New Jersey**

Environment New Jersey  
  
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation

#### **New York**

Empire State Consumer Project  
  
Friends of the Bay  
  
Gotham Whale Watching  
  
Operation SPLASH

Arthur H. Kopelman, Ph. D.  
President,  
Coastal Research and Education Society of  
Long Island

Capt. John McMurray  
One More Cast Charters, Inc.

Charles A. Witek, III  
Recreational Fisherman

#### **North Carolina**

Dr. Alina M. Szmant  
Adjunct Professor of Marine Science  
AAUS Scientific Diving Lifetime  
Achievement Awardee  
Center for Marine Science  
University of North Carolina Wilmington

#### **Oregon**

Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition  
  
Oregon Wave Energy Trust  
  
Karen Anspacher-Meyer  
Executive Director  
Green Fire Productions

#### **Rhode Island**

Deepwater Wind  
  
The Ocean Project  
  
Bill McElroy  
Captain/Owner  
FV Ellen June  
  
Michael C. Tuttle  
Manager  
Marine Services Division  
HRA Gray & Pape, LLC

#### **South Carolina**

South Carolina Coastal Conservation League

Waccamaw Riverkeeper

**Texas**

Texas Coastal Partners

Ann E. Jochens  
Research Scientist, Retired  
Texas A&M University, College Station

**Virginia**

McAllister Towing of Virginia

Moms Clean Air Force

TerraScapes Environmental

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Paul Cooper  
Vice President  
Caris Consulting

**Washington**

Norman T. Baker, PhD  
Executive Committee  
North Olympic Group of the Sierra Club

**West Virginia**

Christians for the Mountains

**Wisconsin**

Milwaukee Riverkeeper