

Thank you and good afternoon everybody. I want to thank you in particular, Congressman Saxton, for that kind introduction, and the privilege of an introduction from you. My first sit down with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation was attendance at the black tie dinner three years ago when Congressman Saxton received their Leadership Award for your leadership in kicking off the effort which I'm privileged to carry the baton of now, which was the Ocean Act, and all the work that flowed from that. Also, hailing from New Jersey, I promised you and your staff members that I'd try to combine all of the personal skills that you highlighted at the end of your introduction to New Jersey as the home of that wonderful great Americana song, "On the way to Cape May, I fell in love with you." I can think of no better song to sort of capture what oceans mean to Americans, and that's the thrill and the love and the joy that they provide to all of us, and the solace. Certainly a song like that gains favor in the American spirit because of what it represents and how we treasure those coastal areas, and how we want to treasure them into the future. It is also the case that combining the personal passions the Congressman talked about that this summer I'm looking forward to finally joining my son on a 57-foot schooner with the boy scouts. So I'm going to combine sailing with one week of scuba diving down in the keys, on the strong recommendation of Billy Causey and Dan Basta among others. So I feel in my professional life now, I will be complete as of this summer with the sailing, the singing, the scuba, and then ultimately the beach combing.

I'm pleased to address this group again. I think this is my second, if not my third visit before you, and why I'm particularly pleased today is the time for renewed action is now. The conversation the last three years has been about the Ocean Commission work, which has brought a worldwide view and perspective to the importance of these ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues and they've provided us three years of hard work and inspiration. Now that's followed on the hard push that we got from Congress, through the leadership of Congressman Saxton, the leadership on the Senate side, and now the time for talk is over. The talk has occurred. All the angles have been assessed and described. All the various pieces of legislation that need to be worked on have been identified, and we have nothing before us. We have no excuse but just to get on with it, and that's what I want to talk to you about here today.

We had 90 days to pull together our response to the U.S. Ocean Commission Action Plan to release the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, which is our going forward effort in responding to the Ocean Commission recommendations. We did that in the 90 day window, but it was the product of a three year collaboration, constructive collaboration with the Ocean Commission, as well as all of the constituencies that provided input. I can't think of a process that I've been involved with that has been more open, more locally driven in terms of the responsiveness and the planning and the discussions that occurred at the local level, more pragmatic, more balanced, and then ultimately, I can't think of a process that will be more consequential than this blueprint that has been laid before us to achieve. I think the extra time the Commission took was inordinately invaluable because it brought the Governors into a level of focus. I think the extra time was necessary to bring the Governors into a level focus that was lacking. I think the extra time enabled us to sort through some of the more complicated aspects of what the Ocean Commission wanted us to move forward on, and were able to narrow some of the competing considerations.

As I sit here and I look at the Ocean Commission product, I think I can say with high assurance that we have complete consensus on probably 85 percent of the product, and that 15 percent of the product remains, it's issues to be discussed with the Congress and the States, but around the margins of the what and the how, not the goal. In fact, when I think of the goals, I think the goals are 100 percent in alignment. We have shared goals. That's a very powerful platform for policy and I think to go to Congressman Saxton's point, it's a powerful platform in which we should heighten the expectation of a time to implementation on those items that can be implemented sooner, that looks a lot shorter than ten years.

All the hard work and planning deserves that kind of hard work and implementation. Let me quickly just sort of drill through some of our philosophy for how we're going to approach this on the administration side, but the themes are going to continue to resound. That it's about administration working with Congress working with the States and constituencies that will provide success. So I'll talk a little bit about the overall philosophy of the process, and then run quickly through a list of the top priorities. This is a savvy group, so I assume not only have you read all of the Ocean Commission Report and its appendixes, but that you've also read all of the Ocean Action Plan and have been talking with our folks, so I'm not going to get into the weeds on that. But let's talk about overall design and philosophy. The Commission made clear, the President strongly supports and the Congress is insisting on a focus on results. This process must be a results-driven process, not a process-driven process. We are already seeing the fruits of that kind of a focus.

The Great Lakes are coming together in a way they've never come together before, but they're identifying priorities and they're identifying specific results they want to achieve. I give that as one example. I could give you hundreds of examples of this idea of defining performance measures and then working our way back to the merits and strategies and sort of achieving them. That is the wave of the future and it is the only way of the future - conservation and use.

A key challenge that we recognize and embrace is developing resource management strategies that will ensure not just continued conservation of coastal ocean and Great Lakes resources, but enhance conservation of those resources in a manner that at the same time ensures the American public can increase their use and enjoyment of those resources and obtain the benefits that give rise to songs such as "On the Way to Cape May." The reason people are flocking to the coasts is because the coasts are wonderful places to be, but if we want to be in those wonderful places, we have to find the ways to ensure their continued preservation and to continue to enhance the values that enrich our lives - the best science and data. It's almost become a trite phrase in Washington, "We need good science and good data," but I can think of no area more important than ocean and coastal and Great Lakes management than upping our resources when it comes to the science and data and our capacity when it comes to science and data.

We know so much about our land-based side of things and when I can only work horizontally in the administration, when I compare the oceans to what we have going on

in the land side, the Ocean Commission was correct. We have more work to be done to begin to equalize out and to reach beyond the land to the shore and into the sea in terms of how we deploy those resources and put them to good use in decision making, and put them to good use in terms of the user communities being able to respect the resource in a way that continues to enhance their experience.

Ecosystem based management. That is a phrase that is common to the forefront in recent years. It is an expression that is still undergoing evolving understanding. I like the fact that it's evolving understanding because our ecosystems continually evolve as we struggle to understand them. So I think we need to look at ecosystem based management as a living process, not as something fixed in stone. There's not a dictionary definition of it, but we understand its framework. We've gotten good advice from the Commission and the other communities, and we need to apply that strategy to begin to define not just near term objectives, but in order to set a platform of understanding for our long-term infrastructure planning and development. Let me give you one of our favorite examples. You look at land-use planning and coastal planning, easily 90 percent of it is locally driven and it will stay that way. Then probably six to seven percent is state driven, and then a little teeny piece of it is actually federal government driven. Well, it's that big block of local decision making that needs information on science and data. It's that big block of local decision making that needs to take advantage of the service that states and the federal government can provide to design long-term objectives and strategies so that when local actors are making planning decisions and infrastructure decisions, they can do it in the tradition of NEPA. They can do it in a way that fully integrates what we want to do in terms of environmental performance on ocean and coastal areas. So when I look at ecosystem based approach, I look at it quite pragmatically of how do we design a system of information that will enable these broader decision making processes to properly take into account our shared objectives. Then of course innovation is central. Just as our ecosystems evolve, our processes and mechanisms for making progress evolve.

We need to encourage innovation and employ economic incentives where we can. Market based instruments that have mandatory performance objectives behind them are proving to be quite powerful. We've got good experience on the land side of that. We can apply that in sensible ways and in appropriate ways in the ocean and coastal area. Also we're finding that there's a toolkit. If we can give farmers conservation payments, if we have good, smart regulation of our point sources, if we have good federal land management on federal coastal resources, and we have local towns and communities coming up with district strategies that's an amalgamation of management, incentives, regulation and other techniques that knit together to effect a particular ecosystem approach. We have to get past this idea that there's a one-size-fits-all tool.

We have a toolkit and we need to align the best tools to achieve our performance objectives. Then of course the foundation for all of this is paramount, Congress is a direction to the Commission, but then with the Commission's communication back to all of us - local involvement. Let me differentiate that. The last 30 years, the United States has led the way in local input into decision making. So a great event for world policy making was the fact that local constituencies should have a high level of input into

decision making. Well the next 30 years, especially in the area of ocean and coastal management, has to be about local involvement in decisions. Because it is only through local involvement that you get buy-in to the solution and that you get ownership over the sustainability of that solution. That way the solution transcends political boundaries and political timelines. It transcends changes in community structure because the local communities own the particular set of objectives that we're trying to achieve. Certainly, my many visits down to the Keys are a classic example of working through a process to getting into a local involvement structure that I personally see reaping enormous long-term benefits in terms of folks now being able to have an ongoing conversation toward future progress in the protection and preservation of those resources. Now, those are the overall themes.

Now let's talk about structure a little bit. It was not accidental that the President embraced the six key thematic areas given us to the Ocean Commission. If it's not broke don't fix it. The Commission gave us six key thematic areas and we thought they were dead-on: Enhancing ocean leadership and coordination, advancing our understanding of ocean, coasts and Great Lakes, enhancing the use and conservation of our ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources, managing coasts and their watershed, supporting maritime transportation and advancing international ocean science and policy. All important categories. What we endeavored to do in the Ocean Action Plan was to take from the large set of Ocean Commission recommendations, take a handful in each of these categories of quite tangible actions that we believe we can achieve on a relatively short timeline to show that success not only is possible, but it's possible across the board in these thematic areas.

It's by focusing on a handful, and we called them highlights, that we believe we can incentivize and inspire the fact that, well if we can get five done in the area of ocean leadership in coordination, then we can get the next 25 done. So in each of these if you're curious what the thinking was behind our action plan, it was just that. It was how do we distill from the Commission reports some things we know we can just move and can move fast on as a way to then inspire action on the remainder of the agenda. Critical to pulling together that agenda is Kameran Onley. In the area of ocean leadership and coordination stands at the hub, and she's now sitting at the hub, of our effort for the administration of bringing us to the next new level of interagency coordination. Part of that was the President's Executive Order creating the cabinet level committee on ocean policy which I was delighted to be designated the chair of. Let me put that in context for you. You've all heard of the Domestic Policy Council.

You've all heard of the National Security Council. Well those are cabinet level councils and they're standing councils and what they do is they take individual issues as they arise. So if we were working on wetlands, for example, that would work its way up through the Domestic Policy Council process as a stand-alone silo initiative. It is rare in the history of this country for Presidents to create cabinet level committees on a particular subject area. It is extremely rare, but those of you who are presidential historians, go look. It almost never happens. However, in this instance it has happened and it is because the Ocean Commission pushed very hard for the notion we need a high-level signal that integration

in this area is of a fair amount of importance that we stood up a stand-alone, cabinet level counsel on oceans policy. Unlike many examples of the past, this is an actively working cabinet counsel. I was pleased to host the meeting of the cabinet members just a few weeks ago, and I want to give you a tangible feel for that meeting.

We had seven or eight cabinet members and every major presidential advisor in that meeting for an hour and a half. Now those of you in the federal bureaucracy know, getting the attention of just a few of those individuals for half an hour is a challenge. We had them in the room for an hour and a half. Part of the inspiration of that meeting was because we had Governor Don Carcieri with us, because it was important to us that the States are equal partners in this discussion, and so he shared with us the perspective of the States. We had Sylvia Earle inspire us with her vision of what this was all about. Because behind any of these wonky governmental initiatives, we have to know the heart of the matter, and I can think of no one who can really deliver on the heart of the matter more effectively than Sylvia, and she left the cabinet members in awe, and that's how we introduced the meeting.

We then had a very action-oriented agenda. We had the Health and Human Services Secretary there. We had the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the meeting. We had the President's Homeland Security Advisor, his National Economic Advisor, and his National Security Advisor in the room. We had the senior leadership on the policy side from the White House in the room. It was very exciting because the nature of the conversation, the conversation you should have expected and that you demand expect of us, is these interlinkages. Let me give you an anecdote of my favorite interlinkage from that process because the staff, for example, from HHS said, "Well, gee, why is Mike Leavitt coming to this meeting? We know he's on the cabinet level committee, but why is he coming to the meeting and why is there someone from the U.S. Trade Representative here? Why is that? Oh boy is this meeting going to be a waste of my time." You know, we're getting this from the staff level.

Well, let me give you one anecdote of the conversation that occurred. Governor Johanns, the Secretary of Agriculture, raised as part of his issue the importance of seafood as a source of agriculture, but HHS has just done their new food pyramid which has recommended that Americans double their consumption of seafood for human health purposes. Well, where does that seafood come from? It comes from our shores under well and increasingly better managed seafood systems and fishery systems, but increasingly it's coming from overseas. So if we are making as a matter of fundamental health for the United States the recommendation that Americans double their consumption of seafood, then we'd better understand the aspects of globalization as it relates to that extra consumption. As we tighten our ability to manage and regulate our fisheries, as we tighten those processes here, well, in a globalized seafood market, what's happening -- are we basically causing the crash of ecosystems abroad in order to feed our public health need?

We need to be highly aware of those interlinkages because it's all connected. What's great about cabinet members, you have a conversation that lasts about three minutes on those

linkages and they just zero right in and can say, "All right. Here's what we need to align to be sure we've got smart strategies on that." We had about 10 or 12 conversations of that level being led by and actually inspired by the non-environment participants in that meeting. That's what this conversation is about. There's an ocean caucus in the Congress right now. That's good, right? But in effect, the entire Congress needs to be the ocean caucus. So the ocean caucus can be of service to the Congress, but really this is a much broader set of issues. This is fundamental to our overall economy, our overall social well being and our overall environmental well being.

Now I mentioned Governor Carcieri. One of our main focuses is this regional approach. Local involvement. The regions are critical. We are delighted that Governor Schwarzenegger came out and got a lot of good attention in California. I would note, isn't it kind of remarkable it was in the year 2004 that the State of California is being heralded for pulling together an integrated ocean planning process, and it's 2004. You know, that's a great thing to celebrate, but it's stunning to me that it didn't happen until 2004. The same is true for the federal government. It's the first time in 35 years that we've had these broad declarations of renewed policy, but now in the Gulf, for example, I'll be going to Florida tomorrow to help kick-off their planning process for the Gulf States' Governors to come together. But having come into government just four years ago, I personally was stunned that there wasn't an existing group of Gulf State Governors already working together on these issues. So at the one hand, we must celebrate that this is occurring. On the other hand, I think we should reflect, "Boy, why didn't it happen before?" All the more reason, get on with it. Get on with it. We're looking forward to Governor Carcieri leading an effort up in the New England States. I've got conversations going on in the Northwest States to see if we can bring a focus broader than salmon. Salmon are critical in the Northwest, but that's what have been driving the Governors to come together and the federal regional actors to come together. But we need to go from an ocean and coastal agenda in the Northwest that's 95 percent focused on salmon to an ocean and coastal agenda that has a much broader focus, including the focus on salmon. That's where we need to go. A regional approach is key and we look forward to those processes.

On legislation, I think the Congressman ticked off the list pretty effectively in our organic act. Love to see Aquaculture, Magnuson-Stevens and then there's a whole raft of subcomponent pieces of legislation either individually or in packages that fulfill many of the recommendations of the Commission. There's every reason to get on with them rapidly because we've done the groundwork. We've built the constituency of support for them. It's exactly what Congress expected as progress, so inaction is not an option.

On research, research is a fascinating area. I'm not going to go into detail on research. I want to make just a fundamental point about research. Research needs to get beyond the research community is the fundamental point I want to make about that. We have structured our processes consistent with recommendations from the Commission, is we have to find the way to empower the research committee in order to empower our users, and that's a two-way street. Our users can do a lot more to find linkages into the research committee to make that research highly relevant. So I won't go into all the details. I'm happy to answer questions about it, but that needs to be a central organizing

understanding and concept, is getting the full life cycle of research, from inception to inspiration to users to information of users back to researchers. That's what we're about as a practical level and that's what enables progress in all the other areas.

When we briefed the President on the Action Plan and got his sign-off on all its various components, we had a lengthy meeting with him. The Secretary of Commerce was there. Undersecretary Lautenbacher was there. The area on which we spent half of our time discussing this issue with the President was on the issue of fisheries; fisheries management, fisheries regulation and sustainable fisheries. The President, in his plain-spoken way, says, "We are going to fix this." There's no clearer direction to Undersecretary Lautenbacher and no clearer signal from the White House working with the Congress that we have an opportunity in front of us to get to this next generation of heightened management and heightened stewardship of our fisheries.

It's important to get it even more right in America because that is going to be central for us to be able to show the leadership that we need to show internationally to show that it can be done well, it can be done responsibly, and it can be done in a way that fundamentally enhances economic growth and opportunity in the developing world as well. But it's important for us to get it right. We can't go to other countries and complain about what they're doing if we don't have our own house in order, and the President is firmly committed to that. That includes increased use of these enhanced mechanisms like ITQ's, IFQ's or Dedicated Access Privileges or whatever the various terminology is today. The fundamental matter is better, more responsible understanding of the pressures on stocks, a better, more responsible allocation of who gets to utilize those stocks and ongoing monitoring of science to enable its sustainable management into the future. A straightforward set of issues. We're going to take it to a new place. Aquaculture becomes key in that conversation. Getting responsible systems in place with respect to aquaculture both here and abroad is a central part of that, and I look forward to a pretty active discussion on those issues on the Hill. Coral reefs and marine managed areas. If ever there's a place in which there's been a lot of energy, much enthusiasm and some concern, it's the subject of taking our understanding of land management and applying it in the ocean context. But to me it's as simple a concept as that.

We have 200 years of experience on the land side and we're talking about taking advantage of that experience and applying it sensibly and responsibly in the ocean side of the equation, but involves the full panoply plan of issues from marine protected areas to limited access areas to broadly open commercial access areas to port access. It's the whole smear, just responsible management and designation of efficient and effective use of these areas that are largely unstructured today. I'm looking forward to that. In the middle of that are these treasured systems. The coral reefs are not just the surface corals, but the deep corals that we're increasingly learning more about. They are the equivalent of the Rocky Mountains and the inspiration that they provide. They are the equivalent of our most verdant valleys that we treasure and hold dear and by understanding those systems, by working within and around those systems effectively, I think those are the unifying resources and when we have those unifying resources, I think they help lower the temperature in the areas in which there's conflict and some degree of complexity and

concern.

So we have to continue to shine a light on those kinds of resources, because I do think they provide the glue. Because that's where people can sit down and have shared values and say, "Okay, we do have this in common. We do share this in common." So if we look at the margins of some of these issues and areas, we know we've got a good, solid foundation when it comes to stewardship and the ethics of stewardship. I really look forward to working with you. Please stay in constant communication with Cameron, and please stay in constant communication with our implementing agency that has been given specific responsibilities. Hold us accountable and help us out. We're in this together. So thank you very much.