

May to July 2010

In the Headlines

President Obama signed Executive Order establishing national ocean policy

On July 19 President Obama took a critical step toward meaningful ocean policy reform to protect and restore our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes by signing [Executive Order 13547](#) establishing a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes. The Executive Order directs federal agencies to adopt and implement the final recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, released earlier that day and available [here](#). This new policy represents the realization of one of the key recommendations urged by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission and championed by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. Looking forward, the national ocean policy and the associated coordinating structure will require dedicated funding for implementation, an issue that the Joint Initiative will continue to focus on as the National Ocean Council begins its work. The Joint Initiative enthusiastically supports the President's Executive Order and urges Congress to take action to secure a dedicated funding source for the national ocean policy. Joint Initiative staff is sending a thank you letter to President Obama for taking this important critical step and continuing his commitment to protecting and restoring our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. Read the Joint Initiative press statement [here](#).

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Activities

Gagosian co-authored op-ed in *Washington Post* highlighting need for independent research funding in the Gulf of Mexico

On July 27 Joint Initiative Leadership Council member Bob Gagosian co-authored an op-ed in the *Washington Post* that emphasized the importance of maintaining a focus on research around the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Entitled "Research on Gulf oil spill shouldn't take a backseat to litigation," the op-ed explained that a majority of the federal funds allocated for researching the spill will be used within the Natural Resources Damages Assessment (NRDA) process. Under this process, the data collected will be used to support litigation against BP and be inaccessible to the public and independent researchers for years. The authors advocated for governmental funding for independent research distinct from the NRDA funding to allow scientists to study the spill and its impacts on the surrounding ecosystems. Read the op-ed [here](#).

Rosenberg quoted in *Christian Science Monitor* article supporting Obama's national ocean policy

On July 19 Joint Initiative Leadership Council member Andrew Rosenberg was quoted in a *Christian Science Monitor* article "How Obama wants to protect oceans: White House unveils new plan." Dr. Rosenberg offered support for the newly announced national ocean policy and explained the benefits of coastal and marine spatial planning as a coordinating tool. Read the article [here](#).

Packard called for a national ocean policy in *The Huffington Post*

On June 21 Joint Initiative Leadership Council member Julie Packard highlighted the need for a national ocean policy, made clearer by the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in a *Huffington Post* op-ed entitled "Decisive Days for Our Oceans." Read the article [here](#).

Joint Initiative's Cantral and Center for American Progress's Light outlined importance of our new national ocean policy

On July 20 Joint Initiative Leadership Council staff member Laura Cantral and Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Andrew Light co-authored an article entitled "Planning for Our Oceans' Future." The article explained what the creation of a national ocean policy means for our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. Read the article [here](#).

Packard presented with National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

On June 8 Joint Initiative Leadership Council member Julie Packard was presented with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award at their annual Leadership Awards dinner. Ms. Packard was recognized for her dedicated commitment to improving ocean conservation and policy and her significant contributions to the ocean community as founder and Executive Director of the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Watkins honored at inaugural lecture of the Admiral James D. Watkins Honorary Lecture Series

On May 15 Joint Initiative Co-Chair Emeritus Admiral James Watkins, U.S. Navy (Retired) was recognized for his personal commitment and dedication to the future of our oceans at the inaugural lecture of the Admiral James D. Watkins Honorary Lecture Series. The lecture series was established by the Marine Technology Society to honor Admiral Watkins' distinguished service to our nation as Chief of Naval Operations in the U.S. Navy, Chair of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, and Co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. The event opened with remarks by Admiral Watkins addressing the current status of ocean policy and the actions needed to improve the governance of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

Watkins and Kelly spoke on panel at Center for Oceans Law and Policy annual conference

On May 20 Joint Initiative Co-chair Emeritus Admiral James Watkins, U.S. Navy (Retired) and Joint Initiative Leadership Council member Paul Kelly spoke on a panel at the Center for Oceans Law and Policy annual conference. The panel addressed Energy and Economic Development and other panelists included Bruce Josten of the US Chamber of Commerce and Randall Luthi, the head of the National Ocean Industries Association.

Mineta celebrated with portrait in National Portrait Gallery

In honor of his numerous accomplishments, a portrait of Joint Initiative Leadership Council Co-chair Norm Mineta was recently hung in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. Mr. Mineta was the first Asian Pacific American to hold a presidential Cabinet post. He was appointed Secretary of Commerce in 2000 and Secretary of Transportation in 2001. He also served in Congress for 20 years as a representative of California and was elected mayor of San Jose in 1971, making him the first Asian American mayor of a major US city.

Items of Note

The President's Oil Spill Commission holds first public meeting

The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling held its first public meeting on July 12 and 13 in New Orleans, LA. Commission Co-chairs Bob Graham and Bill Reilly oversaw the meeting which included testimony from several government officials and a BP executive involved in the efforts to cap the well and clean up the spill. Other panels focused on the social and economic impacts of the spill on surrounding communities. The commissioners heard testimony from local elected officials, representatives from ocean user groups and other affected businesspeople, and non-profit workers. Read more about the President's Oil Spill Commission at www.oilspillcommission.gov.

House passes amendment to CLEAR Act that includes ocean investment fund

On July 30 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a measure amending [H.R.3534](#), also known as the CLEAR Act, to include an industry-funded ocean investment fund. The fund would, among other things, provide for the development and implementation of science- and ecosystem-based plans for monitoring and managing the wide variety of uses affecting ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems. The fund would also support activities to improve the resiliency of those ecosystems in adapting to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. The amendment, offered by Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), passed in the House 209-193. The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and the two previous ocean commissions have consistently recommended the creation of a similarly endowed funding source to support our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

Senate moves vote on energy bill to September

After struggling to obtain support for the Democrat's energy and oil spill response bill, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has postponed the vote until the Senate returns from August recess. The Senate was scheduled to vote on the Democratic and Republican versions of the energy bills, [S.3663](#) and [S.3643](#) respectively, today, but it was suspected that neither bill could garner the 60 votes needed so the vote was delayed until September. The Democratic version of the bill includes offshore drilling and oil spill response reforms. Earlier in July Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) introduced a bill for a National Endowment for the Oceans ([S.3641](#)) that would establish a dedicated funding source for ocean and coastal management based on revenue sharing. It was hoped that the bill would be added as an amendment to the Democrat's energy bill. As of today, however, this amendment has not been included.