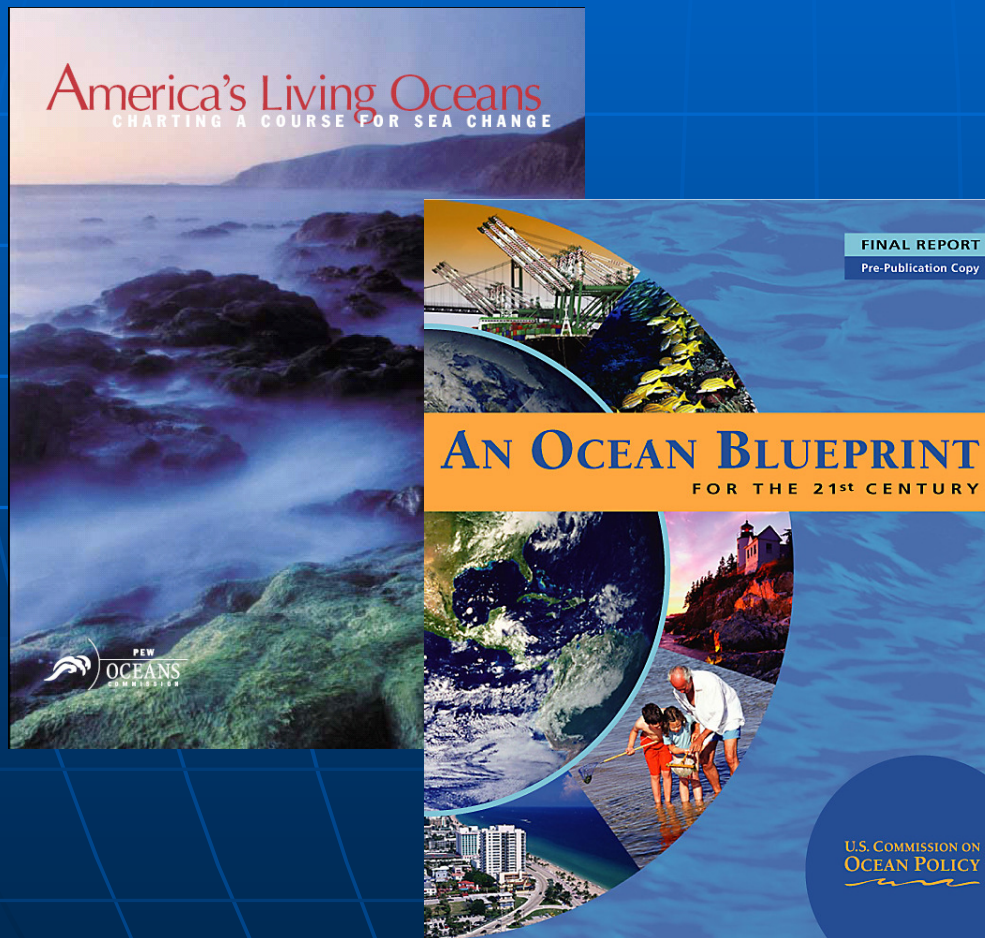


# The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



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# Overview

- Brief History of U.S. Ocean and Coastal Policy
- National Ocean Commissions' Consensus Reports
  - Pew Oceans Commission
  - U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- Ecosystem-based Management Approaches and Regional Ocean Governance
  - Endorsed and Recommended by Both Commissions
- Implementing Policy Reform: Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
- Challenges in Implementing Regional Ocean Governance

## Brief History

- Post WWII focus on oceanography and other ocean capabilities, competition with the Soviets for leadership in science and technology
- Creation of first comprehensive look at U.S. ocean and coastal policy (Stratton Commission)
- Passage of landmarks legislation and creation of new institutions (NOAA)
- Development of piecemeal and ad hoc management responses
- Many unmet cries for revisiting ocean policy with another comprehensive review
- Not one, but two national level ocean commissions

# Pew Oceans Commission

- **Created by: Pew Charitable Trusts**
- **Membership:** 18-members, independent, bi-partisan group chaired by the Honorable Leon E. Panetta
- **Issues Covered:** governance, fishing, pollution, and coastal development, marine aquaculture, invasive species, ocean zoning, climate change, science, and education.
- **Process:**
  - 15 regional meetings, public meetings, and workshops
  - 12 focus groups with fishermen
  - Issue-oriented independent working groups of commissioners
- **Final Report:** Consensus of all members—released in May 2003

# U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

- **Created by: Oceans Act of 2000**
- **Membership:** 16-members, independent, bi-partisan group appointed by Congress and the President. Chaired by Admiral James D. Watkins.
- **Mission and Issues Addressed**
  - Stewardship of fisheries and marine life
  - Status of knowledge about marine environment
  - Relationships among all levels of government and private sector in carrying out ocean activities
  - Commission directed to suggest ways to reduce duplication, improve efficiency, enhance cooperation, and modify structure of federal agencies with responsibilities for ocean and coastal resources and activities
  - Report to be presented to the Congress and the President and President required to respond in 90 days.

# US Commission on Ocean Policy

## ■ **Process:**

- 26 scientific advisors
- 16 public meetings
- 18 regional site visits
- 450 witnesses
- extensive scientific and stakeholder review process

- ## ■ **Final report:** Consensus of all members—released in September 2004

## President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan

- As required by the Oceans Act of 2000, President Bush responded to USCOP report with executive order and U.S. Ocean Action Plan in December 2004
  - Sets up federal interagency structure
  - Not very specific regarding regional approaches, but does specifically endorse two regional processes: Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico

## Ocean Commissions and Regional Ocean Governance

- Both reports endorsed and recommended ecosystem-based management and regional governance approaches as fundamental reforms
- Commissions' recommendations differed in implementation of those approaches, but underlying rationale the same
  - Governmental units at the regional level are at the appropriate scale for many of the needed reforms
  - Ecosystem-based management by definition must be implemented at the local level
  - Ability to engage and motivate citizens where they live and about resources they care about

## Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

- Goal: Accelerate the pace of change toward meaningful ocean and coastal policy reform at all levels of government – building upon the consensus processes, diverse membership, and outcomes of the two Commissions
- Objectives
  - Broaden the base of involved parties and build awareness of the importance of ocean policy reform and of the Commissions' findings and recommendations among policy makers, oceans experts, the media, and the general population.
  - Identify, engage in, and help to initiate local, state, and regional ocean-related initiatives.
  - Facilitate movement at the national level on key ocean policy reform activities that are consistent with the substance and intent of the Commissions' recommendations.

# Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

- Help catalyze action by providing strategic assistance to people involved in local, state, and regional issues; thereby facilitating progress in the regions while building support for reforms at the national level.
- Actively pursue movement on a select number of national ocean policy issues to help sustain support among stakeholders and stimulate changes that lay the groundwork for longer-term reform based on the fundamental principles articulated by the two Commissions.
  - Current priority issues for the Initiative
    - Governance reform (national and regional)
    - Fisheries management reform
    - Funding for ocean management and science
    - U.S. accession to UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

## Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

- Guided by a ten-member Task Force (five from each Commission) led by Mr. Leon Panetta and Admiral James Watkins, chairs of the Pew Commission and the U.S. Commission, respectively.
- Initial funding from Packard and Marisla Foundations
- Meridian Institute coordinates the design and implementation of the overall Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and also serves as the secretariat for both the Initiative and Task Force.
- Officially announced at a press briefing in Washington, D.C. on September 22
  - Lead story in Life section of USA Today, many other media outlets

## Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Engagement at Regional Level

- Goal of the Joint Initiative is to seek involvement in regions where its presence brings “value added” to existing or potential efforts, e.g.,
  - Gulf of Mexico
  - California/West Coast
  - Mid-Atlantic
  - Northeast

## Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Engagement at Regional Level

- Some of the ways the Initiative can bring value added include:
  - Active presence and participation by Commissions' chairs and by commissioners in a particular region
  - Monitor what's going on in different regions to communicate to commissioners and others to help heighten awareness and visibility within the ocean community and beyond
  - Convening and facilitation of workshops or other forums to discuss Commission recommendations and how adapt them to state/regional needs
  - Network—help increase communication and exchange among people active in regions

## Implementing Regional Ocean Governance Approaches: Challenges

- What is a region and how to square eco-regions with socio-political regions?
- Is regional variation in approach a good thing? How much uniformity should there be?
- Institutional and legal impediments
- Functionality and authority—coordination or regulation—implications?
- Political will
- Ongoing lament: “We don’t know what ecosystem-based management is or how to implement it...”
- How to get the public’s attention

# For More Information

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- The Pew Oceans Commission: [www.pewoceans.org/](http://www.pewoceans.org/)
- The U.S. Ocean Action Plan: <http://ocean.ceq.gov/>