

# Federal Ocean Policy Initiatives

Northeast Regional Ocean Council

Deerin Babb-Brott, Office of Science and Technology Policy

November 9, 2022



# Outline

- Growing federal recognition and support for ROPs
- Ocean climate action plan\*
- National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy
- Regional data priorities
- Best practices for tribal consultation
- Best practices for stakeholder engagement



# Support for Regional Ocean Partnerships

- Support for regions increasingly reflected in policy and budgets
- Plus ups in PresBud in last Administration for ROP/data portals
- Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) authorizing legislation directs engagement and support for regions and ROPs specifically
- \$56m/5 years in the IIJA
- OPC will build on NE, Mid-A, GOMA, WCOA examples as sources for:
  - Lessons learned, engagement practices and data portals as national models
  - Leadership in building national policy around regionally defined and implemented solutions



# Federal Ocean Policy Initiatives

- Ocean climate action plan\*
- National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy
- Regional data priorities, best practices for tribal consultation, best practices for stakeholder engagement



# Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP)

- An urgent and “all-hands-on-deck” response to tackle the climate crisis
- Uses ocean-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Focus across ocean, coast, and Great Lakes
- The OCAP will:
  - Include a summary of Federally-planned actions and their benefits
  - Identify gaps in knowledge and application of knowledge
  - Recommend actions to advance the effectiveness of the Nation's response to climate change



# Examples of Ocean-Based Solutions

- Green shipping
- Climate-ready aquaculture and fisheries
- Harnessing ocean renewable energy
- Protecting and restoring ecosystems that sequester carbon (blue carbon)
- Supporting biodiverse ecosystems
- Expanding the extent and level of protection of marine protected areas
- Pursuing ocean-based carbon dioxide removal



# Guiding Questions

<b>Critical Knowledge</b>	<b>Knowledge, Science, and Technology</b>
<b>Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b>	<b>Partnerships and Collaboration</b>



# Guiding Questions

- Critical Knowledge
  - What ocean-based climate solutions should be considered and over what time scales?
  - What are specific examples of ocean-based climate mitigation and adaptation activities that the United States should seek to advance?
  - Which are higher priority? Should any be avoided?





# Guiding Questions

- Knowledge, Science, and Technology
  - What kind of research is needed to implement and evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of ocean-based climate solutions?
  - How can Indigenous Knowledge inform solutions?
  - What are important questions, issues, and unknowns that need to be addressed?



# Guiding Questions

- Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - How can the benefits of ocean-based climate solutions be shared equitably?
  - How should we engage communities in local implementation?
  - How should we ensure that ocean-based climate solutions are implemented in ways that do not harm underserved communities?



# Guiding Questions

- Partnerships and Collaboration
  - What solutions can/should come from outside of government?
  - Where and how can the Federal government partner with external stakeholders across regions and sectors to effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change through ocean-based climate solutions?
  - What elements or ideas can the OCAP include to strengthen government-to-government relations with Federally-recognized Tribal Nations in the implementation of the plan?



# Timeline

- OCAP Federal Register Notice (87 FR 60228) Federal Register Notice: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-21480>
  - Published on October 4
  - Responses due by 11:59 PM eastern time on **November 18, 2022**
    - Email [ocean@ostp.eop.gov](mailto:ocean@ostp.eop.gov), subject “RFI Response: OCAP”
- Tribal Engagement
  - Alaska Federation of Natives – Listening Session on 10/22
  - National Congress of American Indians – Presentation to the Climate Action Task Force on 10/30
  - Formal Consultation December 13
- Goal: Release the OCAP in January 2023



# National Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Economy

- U.S. joined the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy; key commitment is to develop a **National Sustainable Ocean Plan** to sustainably manage the U.S. EEZ within 5 years
- The purpose of the Plan is to describe actions by which the U.S. can achieve greater sustainability of the ocean economy
- The Plan will:
  - Build from Federal, tribal, state, regional, and local management priorities and actions
  - Identify needs and opportunities to support private sector, non-profit, and public engagement/initiative
  - **Identify key actions to advance sustainability**



# National Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Economy

- Will first develop a National Strategy: allows for national engagement in developing a national vision for a sustainable ocean economy and high-level goals and a process for developing a sustainable ocean plan
- To develop the National Strategy, the OPC will:
  - Consult with Tribes;
  - Engage key regional entities –R/As, FMCs, ROPs, and others;
  - Engage ocean stakeholders broadly, including private and non-profit sectors
- Engage ROPs, FMCs, private sector, others



# National Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Economy

- Not a new regional ‘sustainable ocean economy’ visioning exercise: regions and regional entities already define the terms through their priorities and actions – those will form the content
- CZMA-ish model: Nationally consistent objectives and benefits defined and achieved by state/regionally specific actions
- What are the key issues associated with NROC’ vision of a sustainable ocean economy, what does GOMA want to accomplish, and what does it need to do so?
- NROC can leverage its ocean and coastal management experience, priorities, and current workplans and use the National Strategy to highlight and drive needed action to help accomplish its objectives



# National Strategy for Sustainable Ocean Economy

## Potential themes:

Ocean food; ocean energy; ocean-based tourism; ocean transportation; new ocean industries; seabed mining; greenhouse gas emissions; marine and coastal ecosystems; ocean pollution; equity and environmental justice; ocean literacy and skills; economic valuation of the ocean's natural capital; ocean science, technology, and data; ocean finance; other?





# Regional Data Priorities and Best Practices

- Regional data priorities
- Best practices for tribal consultation
- Best practices for stakeholder engagement



# Discussion

