Federal Ocean Policy Initiatives

Northeast Regional Ocean Council
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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

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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, 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