



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

Stephen Morris
*Senate President
Kansas Senate
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Michael P. Adams
*Director, Strategic Planning
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William Pound
Executive Director

March 27, 2012

National Ocean Council
722 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear National Ocean Council Members:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) we are writing in response to the Draft National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan. While NCSL does not have policy that addresses many of the detailed components of the draft plan, we commend the Council on including language repeatedly throughout the plan on the need for collaboration amongst federal agencies and with other entities including state government. It is in light of that acknowledgement, that such collaboration will benefit the management of ocean and coastal resources, that we raise concerns over the design of the regional planning bodies' key to implementation of the coastal and marine spatial planning objective.

As one of the nine priority objectives of the plan, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP), seeks to implement a comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based approach to marine spatial planning and management. As a component of this objective, the draft plan envisions nine regional planning bodies that will bring together federal, state, and federally-recognized tribal partners to develop regional coastal and marine spatial (CMS) plans to improve stewardship and streamline processes. The long-term success in implementing any plans developed by the regional planning bodies will be the involvement of key stakeholders in the process. However, despite the easily foreseen need for state implementing legislation to advance the policies included in the CMS plans, the role of state legislators is not recognized in the CMSP process. We are concerned by this omission and the potential implications this will have for the future of these plans. State legislators are partners in the process with responsibility for state budgets, policy planning and oversight activities and should have a seat at the table to be a part of the consensus building process for the regional planning bodies.

NCSL urges the National Ocean Council to ensure that state legislatures are active partners in all aspects of the implementation plan and we stand ready to assist the Council in these efforts. If you have questions about these comments, or for further discussion, please do not hesitate to contact NCSL staff: Tamra Spielvogel (202-624-8690 or tamra.spielvogel@ncsl.org) or Marcus Peterson (202-624-8670 or marcus.peterson@ncsl.org). Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input

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on the draft implantation plan. NCSL looks forward to continuing conversations with the National Ocean Council as it continues to work on implementing the National Ocean Policy.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Beverly Gard in cursive script.

Senator Beverly Gard, Indiana
Co-Chair, NCSL Environment Standing
Committee

Handwritten signature of Jeff Morris in cursive script.

Representative Jeff Morris, Washington
Co-Chair, NCSL Environment Standing
Committee