

Public Comment

CHAIRMAN WATKINS: The Commission will now

14 come to order again.

15 I will turn the microphone over to the

16 Executive Director for carrying out the public

17 comment period function.

18 DR. KITSOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 We have three people who have signed up

20 for public comment. As you may know from the signup

21 process, you have five minutes to make your

22 presentation. This is a listening session on the

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1 part of the Commissioners, so no questions will be
2 asked, but we reserve the right to send you questions
3 in writing and ask you to respond.

4 Anybody else in the audience who would
5 like to make comments to the Commission, please do so
6 on our web site. Even though this is the last public
7 meeting, while we are writing the report we will
8 still be taking comments during the report-writing
9 stage, so please feel free to do so.

10 You have five minutes to make your public
11 comment. At the four-minute mark, I will stand up my
12 name tag here which will give you an indication you
13 have one minute left, and I will ask you then to stop
14 after five minutes.

15 The first person who has signed up is
16 Danielle Hammond, University of South Florida.
17 Danielle are you--Oh, it's Daniel?

18 MR. HAMMOND: Daniel.

19 DR. KITSOS: I'm sorry.

20 (Laughter.)

21 COMMISSIONER BALLARD: You get six

22 minutes.

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1 (Laughter.)

2 COMMISSIONER BALLARD: He's a big guy,

3 Tom.

4 DR. KITSOS: Well when I saw South

5 Florida, I made certain assumptions and I shouldn't

6 have done that.

7 (Laughter.)

8 DR. KITSOS: Sorry.

9 MR. HAMMOND: That's okay.

10 DR. KITSOS: Mr. Hammond, please proceed.

11 MR. HAMMOND: Thank you. Good afternoon,

12 Commissioners:

13 The points that will be addressed here

14 today are the opinions of the students in a graduate-

15 level class on ocean policy offered at the University

16 of South Florida.

17 We would like to thank Dr. Muller-Karger

18 for encouraging us to present our views here today.

19 There are three main topics that we want

20 to touch on today:

21 One is the concept of fees to cover access

22 to our common property on our oceans.

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1 The other is that of partnerships between
2 the Federal Government, academic institutions, and
3 industry.

4 Finally, we want to briefly discuss the
5 role the oceans play in the pressing issue of
6 national security.

7 An issue that repeatedly comes up in class
8 and warrants discussion is the extraction and use of
9 ocean resources. Resources in territorial waters and
10 in the EEZ are the common property of all Americans
11 of today and tomorrow.

12 These common resources are entrusted to
13 the Federal Government on behalf of the People of the
14 United States.

15 In addition to the cost of extracting the
16 resource itself, extraction of that property carries
17 environmental costs that are most often not accounted
18 for.

19 Because market price does not reflect

20 externalities or subsidies, the cost of ocean

21 commodities seem less than they really are.

22 It is our opinion that a fund needs to be

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1 created, maintained, and dedicated to the risk
2 assessment, hazard mitigation, and economic
3 incentives associated with a given resource.

4 The monies for this fund would come from
5 various sources like royalties, leases, license and
6 registration fees to be applied toward the privilege
7 of using this specific ocean resource.

8 A portion of these funds could also
9 include a substantial education effort that reaches
10 schools and the general public.

11 Another suggestion would be to enact a bid
12 and royalty program for the commercial fishing
13 industry much similar to the timber and oil
14 industries. This would remove redundant fishing and
15 make the industry more efficient.

16 All uses of our common property should
17 carry a realistic cost so that we can manage them
18 just as we do with anything else in our public and

19 private lives.

20 The second recommendation we want to make
21 today is that of outsourcing. Over the past 30 years
22 there has been a tendency for ocean-related federal

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1 agencies to grow. In many cases this is at the
2 expense of creative research and technology
3 development in public and academic sectors.

4 We would like to see the Commission
5 recommend that these agencies outsource more of the
6 tasks that have slowly been incorporated into
7 regional federal lands.

8 The People of our country would be best
9 served by the Federal Government utilizing and
10 stimulating regional and local education, scientific
11 research, and resource management capabilities.

12 This would eventually serve to reduce the
13 redundancy and the duplication of programs within and
14 across agencies.

15 We feel this would strengthen the link
16 between the private and commercial institutions, as
17 well as between the public and its government.

18 In addition, a greater emphasis needs to

19 be placed on the importance of educational outreach
20 programs within agencies. Without such programs, our
21 class would not be able to be here today.

22 Finally, we would like to briefly address

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1 the issue of national security in the context of
2 ocean policy.

3 Our Nation has historically been seen as a
4 leader in great measure because of its Naval
5 strength. The Navy plays an important role in
6 protecting not only our Nation's resources and people
7 but those of other nations as well.

8 We believe that the best way to use this
9 strength is to emphasize the important link between
10 understanding the dynamics of the ocean environment
11 and its association with national security, keeping
12 us generations ahead.

13 In closing, oceanic research is a
14 fundamental necessity for the protection of our
15 national security interests. These interests are not
16 separate from environmental protection, and ocean
17 policy should reflect the relationship between these
18 ideas.

19 Thank you, very much.

20 DR. KITSOS: Thank you very much,

21 Mr. Hammond. That was an excellent statement. If

22 you would provide a copy of that to one of our staff

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1 people, we will get it in the record.

2 Ms. Erica Feller?

3 Welcome to the Commission. You have five
4 minutes.

5 MS. FELLER: Thank you for not calling me

6 "Eric."

7 (Laughter.)

8 MS. FELLER: Members of the Commission, on
9 behalf of the Nature Conservancy thank you for the
10 opportunity to provide comment today.

11 While there are many aspects of the Ocean
12 Commission's work that is of interest to us, my
13 comments today will be limited to the Commission's
14 recommendations on coral reefs, a marine ecosystem
15 with extraordinary biodiversity and human values.

16 The Nature Conservancy is very involved in
17 coral reef conservation in both the United States and
18 internationally. Recognizing the significance of

19 these and other tropical marine systems, we have
20 pledged to work with Conservation International and
21 the World Wildlife Fund to promote partnerships with
22 a wide range of other organizations to protect

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1 tropical marine biodiversity around the world.

2 Key components of our efforts are to help
3 greatly expand the area of coral reefs and associated
4 habitats under protection, eliminate threats to the
5 biological integrity of these areas posed by
6 unsustainable fishing, pollution, coastal
7 development, and other factors, and to improve the
8 management effectiveness of marine protected areas.

9 As a complement to these important
10 actions, our collective work will also seek to build
11 resilience in the face of chronic, large-scale
12 threats such as climate change and MPA selection,
13 design, and management.

14 Our initial focus is on identifying areas
15 within reefs that are naturally resistant to
16 bleaching and spawning aggregation sites for
17 important reef fishes.

18 These can serve as essential sources for

19 replenishing areas damaged by large-scale threats.
20 By linking these source areas through a better
21 understanding of currents, larval dispersal, and
22 recruitment--in other words, connectivity within and

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1 among reefs--we hope to catalyze the creation of
2 representative, mutually replenishing networks of
3 MPAs that enhance the recovery prospects of the
4 component reserves and broader coral reef and
5 associated ecosystems.

6 The Conservancy urges that, in addition to
7 the draft recommendations already in discussion, to
8 enhance the scope of U.S. international leadership
9 activities for coral reef management and
10 conservation, that the Commission also consider
11 recognizing the impacts of climate change on coral
12 reefs; recommend the need to manage for that change
13 through support for targeted research on the
14 attributes of coral reef systems and marine protected
15 area networks that make the resilient; and support
16 for the development of a global network of protected,
17 mutually replenishing resilient coral reef areas.

18 Specifically, we encourage the Commission

19 to include in its recommendations research to better
20 understand resilience of corals to bleaching;
21 explicitly identify areas that are naturally
22 resistant to coral bleaching; incorporate them into

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1 protected areas; and take an active part in global
2 monitoring efforts on resilience to bleaching.

3 We encourage the Commission to include the
4 identification and protection of spawning aggregation
5 sites for important reef fishes within the scope of
6 the protected areas.

7 And we encourage the Commission to direct
8 increased attention to better understand
9 connectivity, larval dispersal, and recruitment
10 within and among coral reefs, and to incorporate this
11 information to the design or redesign of
12 representative resilient MPA networks.

13 We see excellent opportunities for this
14 work to contribute to coral reef conservation actions
15 in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands,
16 Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia, as
17 well as other places.

18 On the subject of international management

19 of living marine resources, we encourage the
20 Commission to expand the recommendations on global
21 leadership in order to have a significant impact on
22 coral reef management in the countries where most

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1 coal reefs are found.

2 In addition to research, the Commission
3 should encourage U.S. leadership and support for a
4 wider range of activities, including development and
5 implementation of MPA networks, integrated coastal
6 management programs to provide a supportive
7 governance context for coral reef conservation,
8 capacity building of individuals and institutions
9 that can contribute to coral reef conservation, and
10 learning networks among management practitioners on
11 priority conservation topics.

12 We urge the Commission to include in its
13 recommendations a need to build upon and expand the
14 multi-faceted coral reef research management and
15 capacity building programs that are currently
16 implemented through NOAA's National Ocean Service,
17 International Affairs, the U.S. Agency for

18 International Development, and the Department of
19 State, as well as U.S. engagement in and support of
20 the International Coral Reef initiative.

21 Thank you.

22 DR. KITSOS: Thank you very much. That

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1 was a very good statement.

2 Our last public witness--and I think it is
3 fitting that it be so, because Captain Bob Ross of
4 the Coast Guard I think has been with us for almost
5 every hearing we've had, just about, and he would
6 like to say a few words on behalf of the Coast Guard
7 as our final public commenter.

8 Bob, please proceed.

9 CAPT. ROSS: Admiral Watkins,
10 Distinguished Members of the Commission, good
11 afternoon:

12 Admiral Watkins, you asked yesterday that
13 the Commandant send you a letter addressing certain
14 issues. I have already prepared a rough draft of
15 that and asked Malcolm to make sure it is responsive,
16 but I thought there were some comments that might be
17 beneficial presented in front of the full Commission.

18 The recent GAO report on Coast Guard
19 levels of effort was mentioned several times
20 yesterday. The support is based largely on the level
21 of resources expended in individual Coast Guard
22 missions or functions. This is a valid measure, but

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1 it is perhaps the crudest measure available.

2 Another more pertinent measure is results.

3 For example, despite a significant drop in the
4 resources devoted to drug interdiction in 2002, we
5 achieved the third largest total seizures in
6 history.

7 We did this by adopting new techniques and
8 new technologies, and especially better use of
9 operational and tactical intelligence.

10 Our interdiction operations are
11 increasingly cued by specific intelligence. Another
12 example of this is in search and rescue where we have
13 been embarked for a number of years on a campaign to
14 "take the search out of search and rescue."

15 By using new technologies such as EPERBs
16 and new capabilities such as the distress call
17 localization capability of the Rescue 21 System that

18 we are currently building, we have been improving our
19 ability to quickly locate vessels and people in
20 distress.

21 When it comes to search and rescue, time
22 is quite literally the difference between life and

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1 death. Rapidly sending one boat, cutter, or aircraft
2 to a known location rather than using multiple assets
3 to search a larger area increases our probability of
4 success while simultaneously reducing the platform
5 hours required for SAR.

6 With regard to comments made yesterday
7 about reduced Coast Guard attention to SAR, I think
8 those comments may be based on a misunderstanding of
9 the situation.

10 I checked this morning with the Search and
11 Rescue Program Management staff at headquarters.
12 They are not aware of any SAR call that went
13 unanswered as a result of our post-9/11 Homeland
14 Security task and priorities.

15 That does not mean that every SAR case
16 since 9/11 has been successful, or that lives haven't
17 been lost. But the unfortunate reality is that
18 success is sometimes simply unattainable, even if we

19 do everything right and we throw everything we have

20 at the problem.

21 This is just as true before 9/11 as it is

22 after 9/11. Protecting American lives remains the

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1 Coast Guard's highest priority, whether those lives
2 are at risk from terrorist threats, from natural
3 disasters, from accidents at sea, or anything that
4 happens in our operating environment.

5 All of that said, given our full mission
6 suite the Coast Guard does suffer from a capability
7 gap. However, this is not just a Coast Guard
8 capability gap, it is a national capability gap.
9 There is no agency with unused operational capacity
10 sitting in a ready locker somewhere to which some or
11 another Coast Guard responsibility could be shifted.

12 Doing so would not close the gap; it would
13 only shift the ownership of the problem. The
14 solution is to grow the national capability. My
15 personal belief is that the fastest path to closing
16 the gap runs through the Coast Guard not around it.

17 We have the requisite infrastructure in
18 place today. The deepwater contract for new offshore

19 assets, the training institutions to properly prepare
20 an expanded work force, the necessary operational
21 expertise and doctrine, the naval and aeronautical
22 engineering expertise required to support the assets,

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1 et cetera, et cetera.

2 And the Coast Guard is closing its
3 capability gap. Perhaps not as fast as either the
4 Coast Guard or the Commission would like, but we are
5 on a growth trajectory.

6 The Commission might want to consider
7 recommending a steeper slope, but from a fiscal
8 responsibility perspective we must avoid growth so
9 rapid that it ends up being wasteful or otherwise
10 disruptive.

11 I heard a question yesterday about
12 monitoring VMS information. I believe I am on safe
13 grounds saying that VMS is only one of many
14 information sources that will feed into the maritime
15 domain awareness capability that we are now building.

16 Within the MDA architecture, there will be
17 Coast Guard people looking at VMS and other

18 information on a 7x24 basis. This will take place at
19 national regional intelligence fusion centers, as
20 well as at lower level command and control nodes such
21 as the First District Command Center in Boston, or
22 the Seventh District Command Center in Juno.

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1 Of course we also expect the National
2 Marine Fisheries Service to use VMS data, but whether
3 or not NMPS will have the ability of even the need to
4 provide real-time monitoring on a 7x24 hour basis is
5 a question that NMPS his going to have to answer.

6 Finally, I would like to talk about the
7 international leadership issue. Yesterday the need
8 for a U.S. leadership on a number of important but
9 relatively narrow areas was raised.

10 I would submit for your consideration that
11 there is a bigger issue here: U.S. international
12 leadership in ocean issues writ large.

13 The issues mentioned yesterday would fall
14 into this, but there are other vitally important
15 aspects such as the United Nations conventional law
16 of the sea, the International Maritime Organization,
17 the National Association of Navigation and Lighthouse
18 Authorities, and other international fora.

19 The U.S. is a leader in IMO because we
20 actively sought that role as a specific national
21 strategic objective, and then earned it through our
22 sustained involvement, our technical expertise, and

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1 our proactive and respectfully couched efforts to win
2 international consensus for improved safety and
3 environmental standards.

4 I would also suggest to you that our
5 national approach to IMO might serve as a model for
6 U.S. interactions with other international bodies.
7 For IMO, the Coast Guard is the de facto national
8 lead agency. We head U.S. delegations to IMO,
9 including up to the full diplomatic convention or
10 diplomatic conference level, and we coordinate the
11 interagency and public input processes for developing
12 U.S. positions on issues being considered by IMO.

13 This does not change the State
14 Department's overall authority with respect to
15 managing international relations. The State
16 Department approves delegation composition and U.S.
17 policy positions, and State is represented on all
18 U.S. delegations to IMO.

19 This approach does, however, put the
20 working level responsibility on subject matter
21 experts who give significant focused attention to
22 U.S. policy positions and to maintaining our

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1 important international leadership role. This might
2 serve as a model for other issues in international
3 bodies.

4 Admiral Watkins, Members of the
5 Commission, thank you and congratulations for
6 reaching this important milestone in your work.

7 DR. KITSOS: Thank you, Captain Ross, for
8 an excellent statement and for all of your help and
9 involvement over these many months.

10 Mr. Chairman, that ends the public comment
11 period.

12 CHAIRMAN WATKINS: That completes our
13 agenda for today.

14 Are there any other business items or
15 other items that the Commissioners would like to
16 raise at this time?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIRMAN WATKINS: Absent that, a motion

19 to adjourn.

20 (Motion is duly made and seconded.)

21 CHAIRMAN WATKINS: Okay, all in favor.

22 (Chorus of ayes.)

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1 CHAIRMAN WATKINS: We will see you all,
2 then. There will be a get together as we roll out in
3 the final endgame with the Congress and the
4 President, the media and so forth, late in the
5 summer. We will inform you by hopefully late July of
6 specific dates that we've been able to negotiate in
7 the rollout plan.

8 In the meantime, go to work. Give us the
9 answers back on the segments that we send you so that
10 we can quickly put together our draft of our report.

11 Thank you, very much.

12 (Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., Thursday, April
13 3, 2003, the meeting of the Commission on Ocean
14 Policy was adjourned.)

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