



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

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Public Comment for the Record
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
1120 20th Street, NW
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Dear Commissioners;

On behalf of the State of South Carolina, I would like to commend the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy for its examination of ocean and coastal issues. I look forward to the opportunity to review the draft report when it is released this fall.

As you learned on the Commission's visit to Charleston in January of last year, ocean and coastal resources are vital to our state. With more than 2,800 miles of estuarine, harbor, and river coast supporting nearly a million coastal inhabitants, the coast is one of our state's large players in commercial and recreational activities. Commercial fish landings pumped \$16 million into our state's economy in 2001, while sportfishing contributed a whopping \$1.3 billion, along with 13,000 jobs. In other recreation areas, the state's famous beaches drew 4.4 million visits in 1999, and that same year our coastal wildlife drew 940,000 visits from photographers and outdoor enthusiasts.

However, there is concern that we will not be able to count on these benefits for long, due in large part to the following signs of coastal distress:

- One-third of our state's assessed estuaries do not fully support aquatic life.
- Ten percent of our state's shellfish growing waters are closed due to pollution.
- In the South Atlantic region, 14 different fish stocks are considered overfished - meaning that sustainable fishing cannot be supported for these critical fish stocks.
- 226 beach closings and advisories occurred in 2002 due to pollution.

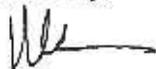
My administration's Quality of Life Task Force recently took steps to address these problems in South Carolina. The task force recommended that the state insure that publicly funded projects do not subsidize damage to coastal ecosystems. It also urged that comprehensive planning be done with the cooperation of local governments, school boards, state agencies and other decision-makers in order to meet our goals of accommodating growth and minimizing impacts to natural resources.

By taking steps like these, states like ours are working hard to address these and other coastal issues, but we cannot do everything. This is why I am recommending the following federal solutions be included in the Commission's final report, consistent with local and other state-level efforts in the United States:

- Regulators should take an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to rebuild depleted populations.
- Congress and federal agencies should revamp federal programs, like those of the National Flood Insurance Program and the Department of Transportation, away from subsidizing coastal and ocean problems by promoting sprawl and development in hazardous areas.
- Federal programs should encourage watershed conservation and habitat protection plans that include growth management strategies on local and regional levels.
- Congress should provide adequate funding for comprehensive planning for, and implementation of, non-point source pollution practices to stop the flow of urban runoff and agriculture and sewage wastes into our oceans.

Again, I look forward to reviewing the Commission's draft report and ensuing final recommendations to Congress, and I sincerely hope that what you recommend will effect real and positive changes toward protecting our nation's coasts.

Sincerely,



Mark Sanford

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