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August 8, 2003

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Admiral James D. Watkins (USN) Ret.
Chair, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
1120 20th St., NW
Suite 200 North
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Admiral Watkins:

It is my pleasure to transmit copies of the press release and conference resolutions from the meeting of All Islands Coastal Zone Management. Leaders from the U.S. island states, territories, and commonwealths met in Pago Pago, American Samoa to address issues in connection with the All Islands Coastal Zone Management theme, "Integrated Island Coastal Management Linking People, Knowledge, and Resources."

The meeting culminated with a collective all island statement outlining an action plan to restore the balance among human activities and healthy ocean and coastal resources which, deteriorated in the last fifty years.

Leaders from the U.S. island states, territories, and commonwealths today called on the United States Congress and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to take immediate steps to protect ocean and coastal resources that form the economic and cultural basis for island economies.

Several action items were identified and adopted in the attached resolution as crucial to understanding island needs and priorities. I hope that you will consider the resolutions during the drafting of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Report.

Sincerely,



Togiola T. Tulafono
Governor

Enclosures

Executive Office Building-Third Floor * P.O. Box 485 * Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799



Resolution of the All Islands Coastal Zone Management Meeting

WHEREAS, Coastal Managers from the U.S. island states, territories, and commonwealths met in Pago Pago, American Samoa, in a two-day summit on the protection of ocean and coastal resources that are the economic and cultural basis for island economies; and

WHEREAS, the Islands Affairs Committee, of the Coastal States Organization, made up of representatives of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, assessed option to restore the balance among human activities and healthy ocean and coastal resources that has rapidly deteriorated in the last fifty years; and

WHEREAS, ocean and coastal resources throughout the United States have been degraded over the past fifty years and recognition of this degradation resulted in the formation of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and a U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of problems affecting U.S. coastal areas are greatly magnified in islands by population growth and immigration and other factors, and island cultures and economies depend on vibrant terrestrial and marine ecosystems for tourism, trade, sustenance and their very existence; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Initiative provides a model regional approach within a national framework that combines local knowledge, cultural values, and community-based actions with science to improve the management of watersheds, nearshore waters, harbors, territorial seas, and the Exclusive Economic Zone; and

WHEREAS, islands can serve as laboratories for assessing and evaluating ocean and coastal resource policies and are in a unique position to recommend actions to improve ocean and coastal management for the nation as a whole; and

WHEREAS, immediate steps are needed to improve water quality, promote best ecosystem management practices, resolve user conflicts, and minimize human contributions to climate change, and

WHEREAS, there will be significant environmental and economic consequences of the degradation of island coastal and ocean resources that extend far beyond the islands.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the All Islands Coastal Zone Management Meeting calls on the U.S. Congress, the Executive Branch of the United States Government, and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to develop a major long term program that recognizes the unique cultural values of each island jurisdiction, and includes the following:

1. Support for unique Regional Approaches to address the degradation of nationally and internationally significant coral ecosystems and fisheries resources, and island specific problems with water quality, erosion, and economic sustainability, all problems common to the Caribbean and Pacific Islands and their independent island neighbors.
2. Technical Assistance and Training to build local capacity necessary to support locally-based programs essential for culturally appropriate, science-based data compilation and analysis, resource management, and public education and awareness;
3. Support for Management- Driven Research to find solutions to the major problems facing the islands including population growth, changing ecosystems, climate change, and evolving economic systems;
4. Targeted Grant Programs to meet the regional needs of the islands based on an island commitment to enhance coordination and cooperation to plan and implement efforts to meet the regional needs of the island; and,
5. Federal Agencies need to ensure that their activities do not cause degradation of sensitive islands coastal ocean resources. Such activities include the construction of highways, port facilities and military activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Island Affairs Committee of the Coastal States Organization calls on the Chairman and members of the US Oceans Commission to meet with representatives of the All Islands Committee to discuss development of a major regional ocean and coastal resource management initiative

Approved, this 7th day of August. Two thousand three in Pogo Pago, American Samoa.



Press Release
Island Leaders Call for Action on Ocean and Coastal Issues

Pago Pago, American Samoa – Leaders from the U.S. island states, territories, and commonwealths today called on the Administration, Congress and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to take immediate steps to enhance efforts to protect and restore ocean and coastal resources. Healthy and productive coastal and marine resources are the foundation of the cultural, social and economic well being of the islands and the nation. Without a renewed commitment to our nation's coastal and ocean resources, future generations will not be able to enjoy their economic, aesthetic and quality of life.

At the conclusion of a two-day summit on regional island cooperation, the All Islands' Committee, which includes American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, issued a statement outlining a Plan of Action to restore the balance between human activities and healthy ocean and coastal resources. Vital natural resources such as coral reefs have significantly deteriorated over the past fifty years and face increasing challenges as natural and man-made pressures increase in coming years.

"The islands are in a unique position to recommend steps on ocean and coastal management," said the Honorable Togiola Tulafono, Governor of American Samoa. "Our culture and economies depend on vibrant marine ecosystems for tourism, trade, sustenance – in fact, our existence. The impacts of problems that affect mainland U.S. coastal areas are similar to but greatly magnified in the islands."

Officials in American Samoa used the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Initiative as a model to develop a comprehensive planning process that examines coastal and ocean management approaches based on near shore, watershed, harbor, and territorial seas perspectives. "The key to success is to begin with local priorities," said Lelei Peau, Deputy Director of the American Samoa Department of Commerce. "By combining local knowledge and cultural values with appropriate science, you quickly start to form a plan of action."

Among other steps, the All Islands' Community recommended specific coastal and ocean actions that would improve water quality; promote best ecosystem management practices; resolve user conflicts; and minimize human contributions to climate change.

"For the mainland policy-makers, our issues often seem so remote," said Julita de Leon, Legal Counsel to the Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Program. "It's difficult for someone whose state does not have coral reefs to become actively engaged in this issue. But substitute the words coral reefs for cod, salmon, lobster, or any other maritime resource, and you begin to see that the challenges we face and the tools to manage these resources effectively are very similar. And we're out front on these issues."

The All Islands Conference is also supported by the Coastal States Organization (CSO), a Washington, D.C.,-based group that represents 34 U.S. coastal states, commonwealths, and territories. "Coral reefs are the wheat fields of the Pacific and Caribbean," said CSO Executive Director Tony MacDonald. "There will be significant environmental and economic consequences that extend far beyond the islands if coral reefs and adjacent lands and seas are not managed properly. Not only are the coral reefs important resources that require additional national attention, but the nation as a whole can learn from how the islands have approached coastal and ocean management issues."

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy presents a unique opportunity for the Administration and Congress to work with the states and territories to raise awareness, protect public trust resources, and chart a new course for the protection and restoration, as well as productive and sustainable use of our shared coastal and ocean resources.

The All Islands Conference identified several action items and called on Congress, the Administration, and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to recommend, develop, and implement a major long term program that recognizes the unique cultural needs and values of each island jurisdiction, and includes support for the following:

1. Unique Regional Approaches to address the degradation of nationally and internationally significant coral ecosystems and fisheries resources, and island specific problems with water quality, erosion, and economic sustainability, all problems common to the Caribbean and Pacific Islands and their independent island neighbors;
2. Technical Assistance and Training to build local capacity necessary to support community-based programs essential for culturally appropriate, science-based data compilation and analysis, resource management, and public education and awareness;
3. Research that supports management strategies to solve the major problems facing the islands including population growth, changing ecosystems, climate change, and evolving economic systems;
4. Targeted Grant Programs to meet the regional needs of the islands based on an island commitment to enhance coordination and cooperation to plan and implement efforts to meet the regional needs of the islands; and,
5. Renewed Federal Agency Commitment to coordinate their activities with island jurisdictions to ensure that such activities do not cause degradation of sensitive island

coastal and ocean resources. Such activities include the construction of highways, port facilities, and military activities.