OUR NATION'S OCEANS: LOOKING AHEAD
A PERSPECTIVE FROM AMERICA'S OLDEST INDUSTRY
An Address to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
by

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Admiral Watkins, members of the Commission, thank you for your kind invitation to address you here today. I am a commercial fisherman from the port of Half Moon Bay, California involved primarily in the fisheries for salmon and Dungeness crab. Since 1992 I have had the honor to serve as President of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), representing working men and women in the west coast fishing fleet. PCFFA is the largest fishermen's organization on the U.S. west coast; its membership is made up primarily of owner/operators of small to mid-size fishing vessels – what have been termed "family fishermen." I am President, too, of the Institute for Fisheries Resources, a 501(c)(3) non-profit fisheries research and education organization. I am an elected harbor commissioner in my county, and currently serve as a U.S. delegate to the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fishworkers, an international organization made up of artisanal and small boat fishermen and fishery workers committed to sustainable fisheries and the protection of our fishing communities. I am also one of two commercial fishing members of the Pew Oceans Commission.

I am pleased to be able to share with you today some of my thoughts on our fisheries – America's oldest industry – as it relates to this first national review of our nation's oceans policy since the work of the Stratton Commission over thirty years ago. I am particularly appreciative of this opportunity to discuss with you our fisheries since no fishing representatives were named to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. I want to make clear that what I have to say today are my thoughts based on experience, study, work and travel, not necessarily the positions of my organization or the Pew Commission.

Fisheries and transportation were mankind's first uses of the oceans. We have every reason to believe those uses will continue to be prevalent in the future. Sadly, too, our oceans, particularly since the industrial revolution, have been used as convenient sewers – a cheap way of disposing of human and industrial waste. That is one use I hope we will look at eliminating as we examine ocean uses and policy. Over the course of the past century our oceans, too, have been the source of resources other than fish, from sand mining the ocean bottom to extracting oil and gas from beneath the sea floor. Increasingly our oceans are being used for recreation, research and production of non-fishery resources, such as medicines and cosmetics, or even new energy sources – both renewable (e.g., offshore wind farms, tidal and wave energy) and non-renewable.

As our nation now embarks on its review of current ocean policies, or the lack thereof, and those that will be needed, we face a threefold challenge. First, is enacting policies to

assure current and future ocean uses are sustainable or, at least, do not impact on sustainable uses. Second, is enacting policies to assure the competing uses of our ocean waters are compatible and not conflicting. Third, is developing policies governing our land uses so they do not impair ocean health and use.

On top of these three challenges, I would place the challenge of how do we also protect those non-biological, non-economic, cultural and social values that we hold dear. America for most I believe, certainly for me, is more than just the world's driving economic engine, more than just the world's only "superpower," more than just a glut of consumer consumption and fast food franchises, more than just corporate logos and corporate wealth. For me it's the small towns – such as the coastal community where I live – and the inner city neighborhoods, each with their own identity. It's having the freedom to escape a nine-to-five existence, to work and create outside of a structured setting. It's starting and operating a small business, not just being a franchise holder. It's celebrating more than just our racial, ethnic and religious (or even sexual preference) diversity, but different lifestyles. It's striking out against homogenization. It's the beauty of our remaining undeveloped and unspoiled lands and waters, not just that locked up in parks.

For my members, fishing is more than just a job. Most came to it not because it was the only employment available, and certainly not to make big money, or for security. They were called to it because of the freedom it offered, the adventure, the beauty. Some love to fish, others just like "messing about in boats." For us, protecting fisheries is not only assuring that fish stocks are harvested sustainably, or that fishing is economically viable, but that we preserve our fishing families and fishing communities.

So our challenge as Americans, as a member of the Pew Commission and for you as members of the U.S. Commission, in developing ocean policy is more difficult than that for most other nations. For us, it's not just economic, it's not just environmental, it's about who we are or, at least, would like to be.

In looking at our fisheries from the standpoint of the challenges I see in the development of a national ocean policy, there are five areas I want to discuss with you. They are: existing fisheries governance, research, habitat protection and pollution, aquaculture, and funding

FISHERIES GOVERNANCE

In understanding the governance of our fisheries, it is useful to briefly review how we got here. In the 225 year history of this nation, in just over 25 years have we had federal management over most of our ocean fishery resources. Congress passed and the President signed, in the U.S. bicentennial year, the Fishery Conservation & Management Act, P.L. 94-265, now commonly referred to as the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which established U.S. jurisdiction over the fishery resources offshore the nation from 3 to 200 miles. The law extending national jurisdiction over this vast offshore area, in what we now call the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), was a natural extension of the 1945

Truman proclamation establishing U.S. control over the mineral resources of the continental shelf.

The FCMA also established federal management authority over fisheries found within this 200-mile zone. During the nation's first 200 years, fishery management was left up to the states and this vast offshore area outside of state waters was largely unregulated except by a few states that were able to extend some control through licensing and vessel registrations, but had no control outside of state waters over activities conducted by non-citizens, not licensed by the state and whose vessels were not registered in that state. This "management" structure worked for the most part because fishing technology was relatively primitive and demand for fish was much less (due to a smaller population and crude refrigeration and transportation). Moreover, most fishing was coastal in nature, although there were distant water fleets fishing off North America for over 500 years, predating the expeditions of Columbus and Cabot. All that began to change after World War II, as the size of fleets from other nations began increasing offshore the U.S., both in the Atlantic and Pacific, and with the technological improvements in fish harvesting and processing/freezing capabilities.

The new law set-up eight regional fishery councils, made up of state and federal agency representatives and public members. Public members could include both commercial and recreational fishing representatives and, after 1986, there were further requirements that public members had to be knowledgeable about fisheries (an answer in part to my organization's complaint of "dabbling dilettantes" on fishery councils). The councils were charged with developing fishery management plans (FMPs) to recommend to the Secretary of Commerce. I emphasize "recommend" because the Secretary, or more correctly his/her National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), has the ultimate say in whether an FMP for a particular fishery is approved or not. NMFS was then charged with developing regulations for each fishery, consistent with the FMP, and enforcing those regulations.

The federal agency placed in charge of the nation's fisheries was itself brand new. The National Marine Fisheries Service had been created just a few years before the passage of the FCMA, largely as a result of recommendations from the Stratton Commission, combining the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and marine sportfishing elements from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. It had no experience regulating fisheries. NMFS was then placed in the brand new National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which was to be the nation's "wet NASA." NOAA itself, not from any grand policy design, but a tift between a President and his Interior Secretary, ended up then in the Department of Commerce. So what we had in 1976 was a brand new agency without any regulatory experience, overseeing brand new regional bodies developing plans for the conservation and management of fish stocks in a vast ocean area of which we had little knowledge about.

What was being hailed at the time as the "renaissance of America's fisheries" has instead over the past quarter century proven to be a wreck rather than a renaissance for our fish stocks and fishing industry. Looking back on it now, it's little wonder. Rather

than investing in research in the 1970's and 1980's to determine the size and characteristics of our fish stocks, the U.S. built up a huge fleet with government loan guarantees and by encouraging fishermen to build new, big trawl and longline vessels. Government-sponsored programs encouraged consumer consumption of fish for which we had no idea of how big the resource was or what were sustainable levels of harvest. In most instances overfishing occurred out of ignorance, in other instances it was deliberate because the law did not explicitly prohibit it. NMFS and the regional councils were oblivious to the impacts of fishing gear on habitats, or what the impacts of other human activities, such as dam operations and conversion of wetlands, were doing to fish habitat. They ignored, or certainly failed to count, that part of the fish catch that was discarded dead over the side – what we call "bycatch" - and the impacts that was having. We not only "Americanized," we destroyed.

So where do things stand now after more than a quarter century? What works, or at least can work, and what needs to be changed? Many are proposing radical changes in the way we manage our fisheries. Certainly if you look at the groundfish disasters in New England and the Pacific Coast, the status of most shark populations and some other fisheries, one could easily conclude we have a disaster at hand and radical change is needed. While I certainly agree that we are facing serious problems in our fisheries, I don't believe a radical restructuring of governance is needed or that it would improve matters in any way.

Looking back at what was done wrong, I don't know if anything would have been done any differently had there been a different governance structure. Without the benefit of hindsight, do we really believe Congress would have funded the research that should have taken place prior to building a fleet? Probably not. Would whatever governance structure that would have been established been immune from political and economic pressure? Probably not. It just would not have been as visible and restricted more to the larger players. Would another governance structure been more aggressive in addressing habitat issues and bycatch, without there first being a disaster? Probably not. We're Americans, after all. We're "happy campers." It takes a major disaster – a Pearl Harbor, or a 9/11 – to get our attention. But watch out once you've gotten that attention.

It is easy to get consumed by what all has taken place in the past 25 years with our fisheries. Rather than dwell on it, however, I think we need to learn from our mistakes and begin corrective action. My organization came forward with a list of reforms during the 1986 reauthorization of the FCMA, and some of those, with help from the National Wildlife Federation, did get passed, including the requirement, I mentioned, that public members of regional fishery councils know something about fisheries, and we did at least get habitat mentioned for the first time. The problem is what did get passed at that time was far too modest.

A decade later, and with a much more formidable coalition, the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, reauthorizing Magnuson-Steven, did pass. That bill made significant changes in the law based on the lessons of the past. It explicitly prohibited overfishing. It

called for a reduction in bycatch. It called for the identification and protection of critical fishery habitat.

It is true that since the passage of the SFA, there are still fish stocks in trouble. There is still overfishing occurring in some fisheries. Habitat designations have been slow, as has been the progress in reducing bycatch in those fisheries where it is a problem. But the problems now are more, I believe, from a lack of personnel and funding within the agency, and making change in an agency culture. The law and the governance structure are sound.

Others may argue that the spate of lawsuits facing NMFS are an indication of a broken system. I disagree. The lawsuits are there because we have a strong law and a sometime resistant agency, or interests resistant to change - whether they be fleets with bycatch problems or land developers unwilling to protect fish habitat.

I am not arguing, however, that the law is perfect or that some changes are not needed. Certainly additional direction to NMFS and the regional councils is necessary, given the implementation to date of the Sustainable Fisheries Act. The legislation by Representative Sam Farr, HR 2570, in the current Congress, is, I believe, a good and measured effort at further improving the existing law. While my organization believes some further "tweaking" of some of the language in that bill is necessary to take a pin-pointed rifle shot at problems such as bycatch, the thrust of the bill is excellent and demonstrates that radical change is not needed.

Before I leave this section on governance, let me just touch on a few criticisms of the law, and specifically criticisms of the regional council system that I feel are unwarranted.

Regional Councils. There has been some criticism of regional councils saying public fishery resources should not be managed by a combination of state agency and public (private individuals) representatives. These critics point to the nation's management of its public forest, range and oil resources. These critics obviously have not taken a hard look at the management of other public resources. In nearly every instance, I would argue, they have been managed worse than our fisheries. The regional council process allows for accessible public participation and a much more transparent decision-making process than that which occurs with the management of our other public resources. To paraphrase Churchill, the regional council process is not perfect, but it's better than every other process for managing public resources.

Federal Agency Responsibility. Critics have argued that management decisions relating to the nation's fisheries should be left to the National Marine Fisheries Service. The fact is, they are. <u>The regional councils are only advisory to the Secretary of Commerce; they recommend management plans, they do not mandate them</u>. The fact is the Secretary, or NMFS really, can reject FMPs - as they have in the past. When, for example, a group of factory trawlers were unhappy with their allocation of Pacific whiting after the Pacific Council had allocated a larger amount for harvest and use by small coastal trawlers and coastal communities, the factory trawlers went to the Secretary

and overturned the regional council's plan. So Commerce has ultimate authority, it just tries to avoid the heat by hiding behind the regional councils whenever it can.

It should also be pointed out that NMFS does have a voting seat on each council and can and does tell the councils whether a management plan will be approved by the Secretary. Indeed, NMFS exerts a great deal of control over the councils. It selects the public members by choosing among the three nominees each Governor submits for each available seat. If it does not like the names submitted, it has sent them back to a governor requesting different nominees. NMFS controls much of the science that is available to the councils. NMFS controls council budgets. And, NMFS has required the regional councils to solely use the legal staff provided by the NOAA Office of General Counsel. So the councils don't even have independent legal counsel.

Regional Council Membership. In the attempt to involve persons knowledgeable about fisheries in fishery management, public participation on the regional councils was provided for. Criticism has arisen, however, regarding those having commercial fishing interests sitting on the councils making decisions about their fisheries that could benefit them financially. Some of this criticism is warranted based on actions by some council members on a few councils and efforts have been made to institute conflict of interest rules requiring those having a financial interest in a decision to recuse themselves. That, I believe, is the proper way of handling potential financial conflicts of interests by commercial fishermen should they arise.

The problem, which no one wants to talk about, is the other less direct conflict of interest. Let me give two examples. Some of the public members represent organizations – commercial, sport, conservation or even academic, that may have specific agendas that representative is required to carry out and whose employment or pay may depend on how they vote as a council member on a specific issue. That, to my mind, is a conflict of interest, which should also be addressed. The more serious problem is that of state fishery directors who are required to vote a certain way consistent with the administration they work for, whether it is good for the fish or not. On the Pacific Council we watched state fishery directors champion hydropower and dam operations, logging and water diversions all clearly at odds with the conservation of fish stocks. When a state administration has a position that impairs fish, such as allowing the destruction of wetlands, is that not, too, a conflict of interest?

Finally, regarding council membership, my organization fought for language to require knowledgeable individuals be appointed to these fishery bodies. We expected that these would be fishermen – commercial or recreational, or conservationists – with first hand knowledge of fishing – the fish, their habitats, the catch and handling. The feeling is those types of individuals would be concerned with the long-term health of fish stocks and the fishery. Instead, however, we have gotten people – lawyers, lobbyists, association executive directors – who are knowledgeable of how to manipulate the process, but know little of fishing and tend to be short-term oriented.

If we are to improve the councils, we have to address conflict of interest much broader and, I think, just prohibit lawyers, lobbyists and executive directors from serving on regional councils. Their advise may prove invaluable, but they should not be calling the shots.

Allocation vs. Total Allowable Catch. Finally, there are critics who say the regional council role should be limited to allocation and that decisions regarding the total allowable level of catch should be left to the agency scientists. That sounds good. After all, they argue, that would keep decisions regarding how much fish can be taken free from economic and political influence. The problem is biologists are not gods. And, as we saw a few weeks ago on the Klamath, when NMFS flip-flopped on what it said would be a minimum amount of flow needed for endangered fish, agencies and their scientists are influenced by political and economic pressure.

While I agree that where there is good science, or at least an absence of credible evidence to the contrary, that a particular total allowable catch level ought to be followed; we should not let economic pressures cause it to go higher. However, I have witnessed too often where the scientists have just been plain wrong. Let me give you some personal experiences:

NMFS and Pacific Council scientists were for a period of nearly twenty years constantly reducing the catch for coho salmon. We argued that reductions in catch would not help the resource, at least not without corresponding actions to address in-river habitat destruction. The scientists chose to ignore our warnings, as did the council. In 1993, all coho fishing was stopped and yet the populations continued to decline. The fish were subsequently listed under the Endangered Species Act. The problem, now finally evident to the agency, is that the fish do not survive if their in-river habitat has been bombed, or should I say logged and grazed, out. If fishermen had been listened to in the council process regarding the coho, some action might have occurred much earlier to protect the habitat. The scientists were just leading us down the path of destruction.

In California, it was fishermen, not scientists, who sounded the warning about squid – the state's largest fishery. The agency scientists, who had done no research in 25 years blithely believed the squid were being taken only after spawning (the squid die after spawning), when, in fact, they were being harvested while they were spawning. It was fishermen, and my organization, that drafted the legislation mandating a research and management program for this fishery, over agency objections. Yes, fishermen may have an economic interest in the fish, but a lot of us want to keep fishing for years and have something to pass on, as opposed to some scientists content to do as little as possible or write the seminal work on the decline of a fishery.

Finally, I doubt very much that the fishermen and other interests on the Pacific Council would have quietly let NMFS get away with their action of a couple of weeks ago, giving the green light for flows that do not meet the minimum for fish survival in the Klamath. Sure, NMFS scientists were not influenced by fishermen; they were influenced by an Administration anxious to keep irrigators happy. So what was best for the fish?

We should adhere to good science, but scientists also must be accountable. We ought not take science and allowable catch decisions out from under public scrutiny.

Let me conclude with this section on governance by saying that I think the existing system is workable, is preferable and can be fixed. Congressman Farr's bill, with some tweaking, is a good example of the type of improvements we can make to the system to assure our fisheries for the next 25 years and beyond can be sustainable. Mr. Farr's bill not only addresses governance, but also calls for more research and more fishermen involvement in research. This is critical because the better our knowledge of fish stocks, the better job we can do of conserving and managing those stocks.

RESEARCH

One of the biggest impediments to good fishery management has been the lack of good data on stocks and their environment. How can we conserve or manage fish if we don't know what's there? Research and stock assessments, however, require money. The alternative to finding the money is either to conduct fisheries at levels that may not be sustainable, or heavily restrict or stop fishing. Neither of these alternatives is acceptable. In addition to finding the funding, however, required for the research and assessments needed for fishery data bases, there are two issues related to research that I wish to discuss as we look at the fishery aspects of ocean policy.

First, there needs to be greater collaboration between fishermen and scientists. Fishermen have a working knowledge of our oceans and fishing grounds and scientists have the technical knowledge and understanding of natural processes. Combining the knowledge of both groups can greatly help in designing and carrying out fishery research and stock assessment programs. Mr. Farr's bill promotes that type of collaboration.

Fishery research is not cheap. However, by utilizing fishermen's expertise and their vessels, where practicable, costs can be contained. Utilizing fishermen and their vessels is also a way of keeping their operations viable during times of low stock abundance. So both the cause of fishery research and the viability of fishing operations can be enhanced by greater use fishermen and/or their vessels in research and assessment programs.

Second, systems must be developed into which reports, research, maps, graphs and other data can be stored, as well as continuously updated, in a scientifically peer reviewed format, that is web-accessible to scientists, fishermen, agencies and the public. In Northern California we are developing such a system, called KRIS (for Klamath Resource Information System) for coastal watersheds that is proving invaluable for the agencies, landowners, fishermen, conservationists and the public. Further, by having it in a peer-reviewed format much of the debate about the science itself is eliminated.

POLLUTION AND HABITAT DESTRUCTION

The best fishery governance structure and extensive fishery research and data collection will do us little good unless factors external to fishing operations are also

addressed. This is a point I keep making to my members, sport fishing groups and conservationists, as well as fishery agency personnel. We're not going to save our fish stocks by being "Magnuson-centric." We have to pay attention to and utilize other statutes, such as the Clean Water Act.

Fishing regulations won't stop the discharges into the Mississippi causing the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico; fishing regulations won't get fish safely past dams; fishing regulations won't ensure adequate instream flows or freshwater inflows needed by estuaries; fishing regulations won't stop the diking and filling of the wetlands some 85 percent of our important fish stocks rely on during some part of their life; fishing regulations won't prevent sedimentation and storm water runoff from coastal development; fishing regulations won't protect stream functions from impacts from logging; and fishing regulations won't protect the waters used by fish from heavy metal contamination and other pollutants.

I can tell you from first hand experience with my organization that over the past 25 years we have had to change our focus from just fishing regulations and those things affecting our fishing operations to an ever increasing number of non-fishing factors affecting the health of the fish stocks my members depend upon. And, during my time on the Pew Commission, much of what we have focused on relating to ocean health has been on issues such as non-point run-off and coastal development.

As I mentioned in the beginning, one of the challenges in developing a new ocean policy will be assuring the compatibility of various ocean uses. For the fisheries, the number one issue of compatibility is to assure other ocean uses do not destroy habitat or pollute. The very best fishery management system will be helpless to protect fish stocks if measures are not in place to protect habitat and prevent pollution. It's as simple as that. It's a daunting task.

AQUACULTURE

A discussion of fisheries would not be complete without some mention of aquaculture. There continues to be a great deal of hype regarding aquaculture, particularly now from biotech interests promoting genetically engineered fish. Aquaculture, which has been around for 3,000 years, is nothing new and no panacea. It can increase the amount of fish protein available, although it's not certain how much of a net increase it will provide, and it's certainly not going to feed the world's starving masses – not with salmon, shrimp, abalone and oysters anyway.

My concern is that while fishery agencies have jumped on the "precautionary principle" bandwagon, or the precautionary mantra anyway, for captive fisheries, they appear to be charging recklessly ahead when it comes to aquaculture promotion and development. That is true in Canada and it's true with our own National Marine Fisheries Service. If ever there was a need to utilize the precautionary approach it is with new aquaculture development, particularly as it relates to the utilization of genetically modified fish.

We know of various benign and beneficial types of aquaculture, carp and oysters for example. But other forms of aquaculture have been extremely destructive, none more so than shrimp and salmon farming. Shrimp farming, at least the way it has been conducted to date, has resulted in the massive destruction of mangroves, polluted coastal areas and displaced traditional fishing communities. We have watched in many developing nations fisheries supplying food to local communities displaced by corporate operations producing shrimp for the insatiable demand of first world markets.

In the case of salmon farming, there has been widespread pollution resulting from these operations – from both uneaten feed and heavy amounts of fecal material around the netpens. There is a heavy use of antibiotics, particularly in nations such as Chile where enforcement is lax. Disease from farmed fish has spread to native stocks. Farmed fish escape net pens with alarming regularity threatening native fish populations. Finally, there is the question of farming fish such as salmon, that are carnivores, where an estimated four pounds of feed (that may include wild harvested fish) is needed to produce one pound of salmon flesh.

I think certain forms of aquaculture have promise but, as I mentioned, we need to proceed with caution, not recklessly. In establishing a policy for aquaculture in ocean waters, such operations should not be allowed to proceed unless:

1. They are non-polluting
2. The operations are contained or such that fish cannot escape.
3. They do not spread disease to native stocks or threaten or compete with wild stocks.
4. They do not utilize antibiotics.
5. They are efficient in food conversion and do not rely on wild-caught fish for feed
6. The operations do not displace traditional fishing operations.
7. The operations comply fully with all environmental and labor standards.

In addition to what I have mentioned above, there may also be human health concerns that should be considered. While it is perhaps not within the scope of ocean policy formulation, I would argue that labeling of farmed fish and genetically modified fish should be required.

FUNDING

Finally, for there to be an effective program for conserving our fish stocks and preserving our fisheries, there has to be funding for management, for research and for enforcement. Given the recent downturn in economies at the federal and state levels here in the United States and the competing needs for funds even during the best of times, some alternative sources of money for fishery programs are needed.

One source of funding that has been suggested is a user fee. In my state we have used such fees extensively since our fishery programs are expected to pay for themselves. The

funding is raised, depending on the fishery, through a combination of fishing license revenues, landing taxes, permit and stamp fees. Such might be considered at the federal level. If so, however, I don't think it will raise the necessary funds and if the fees are too high it may make U.S. caught fish uncompetitive with fish from other nations, or harm those fishermen whose states, particularly on the west coast, already charge fairly substantial user fees.

If we did go to a user fee system, it would be imperative a special fund be set up in the treasury earmarking the funds for fishery related programs only. We don't want to see monies raised from codfish or swordfish going to pay subsidies for an Enron or Archer-Daniels-Midland overseas product promotion. Also, fishermen paying fishery fees to states should be given credit for that in any form of federal fishery user fee system.

An alternative form of user fee that I believe to be the most equitable and one that will raise the most money for needed programs, would be a nominal *ad valorem* fee charged on all seafood sold in the U.S. at the point of sale. This would be fair to all, and would not be onerous since it would be based on the value of the fish at point of sale. Despite the howls from importers and some in the U.S. distribution sector, this would not be a hardship, it would not bankrupt any seafood purveyor, and most consumers would gladly pay it if they knew the funds were going for fish conservation and research.

CONCLUSION

Admiral and commissioners, I again want to thank you for this opportunity to address you here today. Our job, that is the Pew Commission's and the U.S. Commission's, is a daunting one.

There are no easy answers. There are no panaceas. There are no silver bullets. There is, in a sense, to use Churchill's words, only "blood, sweat and tears." There are any number of groups out there that would have you believe they have the magic answer from Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs) to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Some of these proposals may have limited value, but they are not the complete answer. For our fisheries, there are no easy answers, but the answers are there: adherence to sound biological principles, thorough research, strong enforcement, and tough measures to protect and restore fish habitat and prevent and clean-up pollution are needed for sustainable fishing. And, our industry itself needs to have access to fish stocks, its infrastructure and markets protected. With that fisheries will remain a significant use of our oceans and remain America's oldest industry.

I hope during the next year that our two commissions can work together, to be more efficient and not duplicate one another's work. I have certainly appreciated this time with you here and look forward to answering your questions and discussing with you issues of ocean policy. Thank you.

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