March 1, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Office of the Speaker
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Office of the Democratic Leader
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader, U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support smart ocean planning for our coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems.

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Democratic Leader Reid,

We are writing to express our strong support for ocean planning efforts that are underway in regions around the country. This year, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions will finalize regional ocean plans, and the West Coast, Caribbean and Pacific Islands regions have planning processes well underway. In addition to these regional efforts, multiple individual states are also developing ocean plans for their state waters, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Washington, Connecticut and Oregon.

Regional ocean planning efforts have emerged from the ground up, with their roots in state sponsored partnerships. This science-based and data-driven process provides a tool for stakeholders and government to cooperatively solve problems. Ocean planning provides improved information and cross-sector engagement that can help identify and resolve potential conflicts early, helping decision makers in the private and public sectors to do their jobs better. This improves outcomes for everyone, supporting a healthy ocean and vibrant economy.

In recent years, however, legislative provisions attempting to undermine regional ocean planning have been repeatedly inserted in a variety of legislation, particularly appropriation bills. These provisions attack both ocean planning itself and the National Ocean Policy, Executive Order 13547, that ensures federal agencies come to the table as partners with the states and regions that elect to voluntarily
create ocean plans. These legislative provisions are misguided and would only undermine our ability to bring the best information and the right people together to make smarter decisions for the economy, our communities, and the environment. **We strongly object to these provisions and urge you to oppose inclusion of any anti-ocean planning or anti-National Ocean Policy provision or rider in legislation moving through the United States Congress.**

In order for ocean planning efforts to succeed, federal agencies have to do their part. Legislative attacks on ocean planning most commonly come in the form of riders that would arbitrarily restrict a federal agency’s participation in regional ocean planning activities. These attacks threaten to weaken efforts to connect multiple federal agencies with each other and with state, tribal, local, and business stakeholders to share information on current and planned ocean uses, collect better ocean data, and efficiently coordinate decision-making. Without this kind of coordination we see duplicative and conflicting processes among agencies and states and uncertainty among ocean-based industries that can increase the time and money required for project development. The bottom line is that these legislative attacks interfere with federal agency participation in voluntary, coordinated, regional efforts that are enhancing ocean and coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems. **Accordingly, we urge you to reject any legislative provision or rider that would obstruct federal agency participation in regional ocean planning or the National Ocean Policy.**

Sincerely,

**National**

American Littoral Society  
Blue Frontier  
Chamber of Shipping of America  
Consortium for Ocean Leadership  
Cox Maritime  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Friends of the Earth  
Friends of the National Ocean Policy  
Greenpeace  
Hands Across the Sand  
Interfaith Oceans  
League of Conservation Voters

Mangrove Action Project  
Marine Conservation Institute  
National Boating Federation  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Nature Abounds  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
North American Marine Environment Protection Association  
Ocean Conservancy  
Ocean Conservation Research  
Ocean River Institute  
Oceana  
Sailors for the Sea  
Save Our Shores
Sea to Table
Shark Stewards
Surfrider Foundation
The Wilderness Society
Wild Oceans
WILDCOAST
Wildlife Conservation Society

Regional
Center for Chesapeake Communities
Conservation Law Foundation
East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Gulf Restoration Network
New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance
Northeast Marine Pilots Association
Northwest Watershed Institute
Markian Melnyk
President
Atlantic Grid Development LLC

Alaska
Alaska Wilderness League

California
AZUL
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Defense Center
Ocean Defenders Alliance

The Otter Project
Waittt Foundation
Waittt Institute
Richard Charter
Coastal Coordination Program
The Ocean Foundation
Marilyn O’Neill
Founder & CEO
Nautilus Environmental
Marc Shargel
Sea Life Photographer and Author
Living Sea Images
Dawn Wright, Ph.D.
Chief Scientist
Environmental Systems Research Institute
Colorado
New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance
Northeast Marine Pilots Association
Northwest Watershed Institute
Markian Melnyk
President
Atlantic Grid Development LLC

Connecticut
Colorado Ocean Coalition
Connecticut Ornithological Association
Mystic Aquarium
Mary Ann Horrigan
NESS Program Director
New England Science & Sailing Foundation
Marcia Wilkins
Conservation Chair
Connecticut Sierra Club

Delaware
Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware
Captain Stephen A. Roberts
Pilot
Delaware Bay and River
Florida

The Snook & Gamefish Foundation
Rozalind Jester, Ph.D.
Florida SouthWestern State College
Marine Science Faculty
Edward Schwerin
Political Science Professor
Florida Atlantic University
Scott Sheckman
Owner
NationalOceanPolicy.org

Hawaii

Marjorie Ziegler
Executive Director
Conservation Council for Hawai’i

Louisiana

Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe

Maine

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Island Institute
SeaKeeper
Ryan Beaumont, P.E.
Principal Engineer
R. M. Beaumont Corp.
Allyson Cavaretta
Director of Sales & Marketing
Meadowmere Resort
Ogunquit’s Environmental Leader
Christopher Mayo
Town of Wells Harbormaster
Richard C. Nelson
Captain F/V Pescadero
Maine Regional Ocean Planning Advisory Group
Susan Little Olcott
Sydney Roberts Rockefeller
Paul Williamson
Development Manager
Apex Clean Energy

Maryland

1000 Friends of Maryland
Jworld Annapolis
Maryland Academy of Sciences
John H. Dunnigan
Sailor and Grandfather
Mark Eustis
Managing Partner
Grey Owl Analytics, LLC
Michael Grimes
S/V Blue Chip
Daniel Trott
Owner and Founder
Maritime Sector Solutions, LLC

Massachusetts

Alewives Anonymous
Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association
Richard F. Delaney
President & C.E.O.
Center for Coastal Studies
Lindsay Hirt
Marine Biologist and Wildlife Naturalist
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Les Kaufman
Professor of Biology,
Boston University Marine Program and
Marine Conservation Fellow,
Betty and Gordon Moore Center for Science
and Oceans at Conservation International

Ted Maney
Biology Department
NEMAC Cat Cove Marine Lab
Salem State University

Megan Ottens-Sargent
BOEM Federal Task Force, for Aquinnah, MA
Chair, MV Water Alliance

Tedd Saunders
CEO, EcoLogical Solutions Inc.
& CSO, The Saunders Hotel Group

Kevin D. E. Stokesbury, Ph.D.
School for Marine Science and Technology
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

New Hampshire

Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation
Seacoast Science Center

New Jersey

Environment New Jersey
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation

New York

Empire State Consumer Project
Friends of the Bay
Gotham Whale Watching
Operation SPLASH

Arthur H. Kopelman, Ph. D.
President,
Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island

Capt. John McMurray
One More Cast Charters, Inc.

Charles A. Witek, III
Recreational Fisherman

North Carolina

Dr. Alina M. Szmant
Adjunct Professor of Marine Science
AAUS Scientific Diving Lifetime Achievement Awardee
Center for Marine Science
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Oregon

Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
Oregon Wave Energy Trust
Karen Anspacher-Meyer
Executive Director
Green Fire Productions

Rhode Island

Deepwater Wind
The Ocean Project

Bill McElroy
Captain/Owner
FV Ellen June

Michael C. Tuttle
Manager
Marine Services Division
HRA Gray & Pape, LLC

South Carolina

South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
Waccamaw Riverkeeper

Texas

Texas Coastal Partners

Ann E. Jochens
Research Scientist, Retired
Texas A&M University, College Station

Virginia

McAllister Towing of Virginia

Moms Clean Air Force

TerraScapes Environmental

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Paul Cooper
Vice President
Caris Consulting

Washington

Norman T. Baker, PhD
Executive Committee
North Olympic Group of the Sierra Club

West Virginia

Christians for the Mountains

Wisconsin

Milwaukee Riverkeeper