

**FTS-DOC-CONFERENCING**

**Moderator: Andrew Winer  
August 13, 2010  
3:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Good afternoon and thank you for standing by. All participants will be able to listen only until the question-and-answer session. This conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the call over to Andy Winer. You may begin.

Andrew Winer: Good afternoon for most of you, and good morning for a couple of you. And, welcome to our call on the National Ocean Policy as it relates to the Aquaculture industry. And, I'm Andy Winer. I'm the Director of External Affairs at NOAA, and today I'm being joined by Jen Lukins from the NOAA Office of Policy; Sam Rauch, who's the Deputy Administrator for Regulatory Programs; Susan Bunsick, who's the Director of Policy for NOAA Fisheries Aquaculture Program.

And then, we're being ably staffed by members of the National Ocean Council staff, including Andy Lipsky and Sharon Hayes. Danielle Rioux from the Office of the Undersecretary; Kate Naughten, Director of Communications for NOAA Fisheries Aquaculture Program; James Chang from the External Affairs Program; and Teresa Christopher, also from our Office of Policy. And,

we'd welcome all of you and look forward to an informative discussion this afternoon.

The reason for this call is that many of you were involved in roundtable discussions that were held last year to provide input on the Ocean Policy Task Force's Interim Reports. And now that the final report is out and President Obama has adopted it through his National Ocean Policy, we wanted to come back to you and to take the opportunity to report and share an overview of the policy with some specific insights on its impact on the Council.

So, what we're going to do is start with a presentation from Jen Lukins on policy, a presentation from Sam Rauch on the implementation and impacts to the Aquaculture community, and then we'll be taking some questions and answers after that's done. And, we'll give you directions on that.

So with that, let me introduce Jen Lukins and turn the show over to her.

Jennifer Lukins: Thank you, Andy. Hello everyone. I'm really happy to be here today to talk about the National Ocean Policy, which on July 19, President Obama acted upon the final recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force and signed an Executive Order adopting the new National Ocean Policy for the stewardship of our oceans, our coasts, and Great Lakes.

This is truly a historic moment for our oceans, because for the first time in our Nation's history, we have a comprehensive National Ocean Policy, something that was called for by both the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Ocean Commission. If I had to communicate this policy in three words, it would be healthy oceans matter. Oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes play a crucial role in the life of every American. Coastal counties are currently home

to over half of America's total population, and together they generate approximately 57% of our Gross Domestic Product.

Coastal regions also provide enormous environmental benefits. Shallow coastal wetlands provide a buffer against coastal storms. Wetlands and coral reefs serve as nursery grounds for many species of marine animals. And, estuarine marshes and bays filter nutrients flowing from uplands to the sea. Our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes also hold great recreational and cultural value, as witnessed by the 90 million people who come to them each year for vacation and recreation.

The future of these areas is in jeopardy, as dozens of different ocean and coastal interests are racing to stake their claim in the ocean and compete for ocean space and resources. These land and ocean activities are currently regulated on a narrow sector by sector basis. Current policies really do lack integration, understanding, or consideration of how the different activities could impact one another, or really their collective impact on the ecosystem.

We need to both recognize the services a healthy ocean ecosystem provides, and identify individual and collective impacts of the multiple human activities. By understanding both sides of this equation, what we get from our oceans and coasts and how our activities impact those ecosystem services, we can make better decisions on how and where we live, work, and play on our coasts. In short, being smart stewards means retaining multiple benefits.

So, the National Ocean Policy really does change how we do business. At present, we regulate human activities in our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes at the Federal level with approximately 140 statues, regulations, and policies. This piece meal, sector by sector, and issue by issue approach really misses the big picture. It misses the understanding that the different parts of the

ecosystem are interconnected to one another, and so too should the policies be integrated.

Therefore, the new Ocean Policy and ecosystem-based Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning call for coordination among existing management regimes across the Federal Government and in the Federal Government and regions. In addition, the new policies require government agencies to work together to engage stakeholders in the new open and participatory framework so that all stakeholders can have a seat at the table to participate in planning.

The shared values of the President's National Ocean Policy include the four listed here. He's announced the historic policies that are based upon the recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force. These recommendations of the task force were formed in part from input from the public at six regional meetings held throughout the country in the series of 38 expert roundtables and thousands of written comments that were submitted by mail and through the Internet.

Based upon this input, the policy identifies these shared values among stakeholders that are depicted here on the slide. It really does focus that there needs to be a balance between ocean health and community prosperity. The policy levels the playing field for all stakeholders so they can have a voice and respects the unique character of each region in the United States by taking a regional approach to Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning. It also makes decisions based upon the best available science.

The building blocks of the National Ocean Policy and what we need to implement - to make it into a reality is first, the National Ocean Council has been formed of 24 different Federal agencies and offices that are charged with

coordination, setting goals for implementing ocean policy, and measuring outcomes to ensure that the Ocean Policy serves America's communities.

In that policy, there are nine National Priority Objectives that embrace coordination and integration among all levels of government to address pressing issues such as climate change and ocean acidification.

The third building block is Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning as a public policy process to help us better determine how the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes are sustainably used and protected now and for future generations.

And the last is the regional planning bodies that will implement Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning to ensure that the unique needs of each region of the US are met in a way that respects regional objectives and priorities.

As I said, the National Ocean Policy and the Executive Order set up a National Ocean Council. Here you see a copy of its Web site. And on this Web site, you can find links to the final recommendations of the task force and the Executive Order that was signed by the President on July 19. And, this Web site will be the center point of information in the future as the Ocean Council begins implementation of the National Ocean Policy.

So, I want to talk a little bit about the nine priority objectives that are found in the policy itself for implementation. They are listed in the column on the left.

It'll be up in just a second. There we go.

They're listed in two different categories. The first category is how we do business. And, it represents overarching ways in which the US Government must operate differently to better improve stewardship.

The second category listed here are areas of special emphasis, found on the right hand side of the slide, which represent substantive areas of particular importance to achieving this National Ocean Policy. The Policy outlines that the National Ocean Council will develop strategic action plans for each one of these priority objectives over the course of the next 6 to 12 months.

At this point, it's just a glimpse of what the policy contains, and Sam Rauch from Fisheries is going to go into some more detail for you.

Sam Rauch: Thanks, Jennifer. So at the heart of the new Ocean Policy is coastal marine spatial planning. It's one of the nine priority objectives, and it's made up of several important components. First and foremost is that it has a fair and open process for all the stakeholders to participate in managing our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

It has a focus on unique regional needs and priorities that have the highest value for each community, truly stressing that this is supposed to be a bottom-up approach as opposed to a top-down directive from Washington, D.C. The management of the management of the ecosystems as a whole, rather than species-by-species, or issue-by-issue, or sector-by-sector approach is a key part of this, and a part of the entire National Policy as Jen already articulated. Finally, the objective science as a way to ensure stakeholders start from a common understanding of current conditions as a basis for joint decision making.

By weaving these elements together, we grow towards shared responsibility for coastal resources that we all depend on. This approach will provide a fair and rational way to make difficult decisions that will impact all of us. But, CMSP is not another layer of bureaucracy or regulation. Rather, it is a way of

making the existing authorities work together better to support coastal communities and stakeholders.

Because none of the two - no two regions of the country are alike, there is no one size fits all recipe for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning. There's already a lot of Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning going on in various local regions, and there are different processes that are being undertaken. Each region and its stakeholders will have the opportunity and responsibility to tailor the processes that happen in that region, ensuring that all interests and users are represented.

This bottom-up approach will ensure that the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning serves and responds directly to community needs. The nine regional planning bodies established under the policy are designed to mirror the geography of the ocean, coast, and Great Lakes. You can see them on the chart. And also, the existing regional government structure, such as the West Coast Governor's Agreement, so that communities within each region can work together towards developing solutions that make sense for issues that they share in common with one another.

NOAA will sit on all of the nine regional planning bodies. Other members of these planning bodies will include other Federal agencies, states, tribes, with authorities relevant to each region and to the issue at hand. Members of the regional planning bodies will need to be able to make decisions and commitments throughout the process on behalf of the agencies.

During the comment period, we heard from the Regional Fishery Management Councils about whether they would be on the planning bodies as well, and while they are not one of the initial members on the planning bodies, the framework does require a formal consultation process be outlined to consult

with the Fisher Management Councils. And also, there's a process for as we go forward, evaluating whether or not they should be sitting as a member on the regional founding bodies itself.

There are basically a three-pronged approach for reconnecting the coastal communities with their ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes environment outlined in the framework. As I mentioned, it turns the process away - the spotlight away from D.C., and restores the focus to the regional communities and ecosystems. The units that makes sense to the people and the environment.

The framework establishes a decision making process that provides a mechanism for coastal and industry stakeholders to engage with one another and plan for the future. It mandates decision making be based on the best available science to ensure that stakeholders begin working from a shared frame of reference and knowledge.

The process is not intended to provide - is - I'm sorry. The process is intended to provide a more effective and transparent way to thoughtfully plan for multiple uses of the marine environment in a sustainable manner. Instead of reacting to crisis or conflicts as they arise. The process includes traditional uses such as commercial and recreational fishing, coastal aquaculture, transportation, conservation, and culture.

It also provides a framework to consider emerging uses such as renewable energy, closed - recirculating aquaculture, or offshore aquaculture. The process will provide a level playing field for all of the interests in determining how to best use our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. It doesn't promote competition among the various users, but instead works to transform the current dynamic among the users into one of cooperation, respect, and collaboration.

It's important to note that the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning process is not intended to delay or halt any existing plans for ocean, coast, or Great Lakes resources. Rather, it envisions a regionally based collaborative planning process in which key agencies and stakeholders have meaningful voices and corresponding responsibilities in identifying the goals and objectives for the regional waters, and in designing the desired mosaic of uses that reflect those goals.

The resulting regional and coastal marine spatial plans will for the first time explicitly take into account the full range of issues, outcomes, and management strategies to achieve those objectives. The National Ocean Council will provide guidance and oversight to the regional initiatives, but all those initiatives will be basically built from the bottom up.

As I mentioned before and as Jennifer mentioned, science is at the heart of both the new National Policy and the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning framework. Our planet is constantly changing, hence the need for ongoing monitoring and ongoing research to understand why the changes are underway and informed decisions. Establishing science is the basis for decision making and enables thoughtful discussions and informed solutions for preserving existing uses while carefully considering new activities.

In order to have credibility with the stakeholders, our scientists will be challenged to grow their skills as communicators to be responsive to their needs and thus build the relationships of trust so the communities will have the confidence in their data and knowledge.

Aquacultures are important to the whole process. There are two separate ways that the aquacultural community can participate. One is through participation

in Regional Fishery Management Councils. This is important at certain Councils which have an active aquacultural community as part of them. And as we indicated, they will have a defined formal role in the process. Nevertheless, individual aquaculture operations or aquaculture groups have an opportunity and should take advantage of the opportunity to engage individually as a stakeholder.

As we indicated, each one of these Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and the regional planning bodies have to have an open and transparent stakeholder process and decision making process, and this is a way for you individually to engage and help make sure that your concerns are addressed as we go to the outcome.

Now, we did hear through many of the listening sessions that Jennifer outlined, when we talked to the aquaculture people and we heard comments from the aquaculture people about certain elements to this process. One of them was about dealing with the balance between conservation in existing ocean uses.

It is important to note that the policy does call for a preservation of existing current uses, and it sets a framework for how the new expansion of those uses or new uses are going to be able to do that and work collaboratively. The test was focused on stewardship. It didn't single out individual sectors, but did envision that all the sectors would work, and it did understand that the ocean provides a solid basis and input to our economy and our social fabric, and it is important to keep many of those uses continually.

There was also a discussion about the use of the precautionary approach from the aquaculture community and what that meant. Precaution is a tool or approach, but it does not mean that we should stop all activities until we

determine what the effects are going to be. Rather, as indicated on the slide, the policy explicitly uses the definition of the precautionary approach set forth in the (Rio) declaration, which is presented there which says that the lack of scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

So, those are some of the main - a couple of the main topic we've heard from the aquaculture community. Let me turn it back over to Jennifer to - for concluding remarks before we open it up for questions.

Jennifer Lukins: Thanks, Sam. Just wanted to say in closing that while the ocean's promise is boundless, we have learned that its resources are not. The President's new National Ocean Policy embraces a new ocean ethic, one that recognizes the essential link between ocean health and our prosperity, well being, and security. Although the policy spells out how our stewardship role must evolve to ensure a vibrant ocean tomorrow, it rests on the foundation of education and outreach that is needed to grow ocean literacy.

A stronger knowledge base will empower members of coastal communities to become active stewards of our oceans and coasts, both to modify their own footprints on ocean ecosystems and to support increasingly sophisticated management plans from the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning process.

So, that summarizes the policy itself, but I want to turn it over at this point to Andy, to moderate to see if anyone has questions.

Andrew Winer: Thank you, Sam. Thank you Jen. And at this time, I'd like to ask the operator to explain how it is that you can jump online so that you can ask whatever questions you may have.

Coordinator: Thank you. If you would like to ask a question, please press star, 1. You will be announced prior to asking the question. If you wish to withdraw your question, you may press star, 2.

Once again star, 1 if you would like to ask a question.

Andrew Winer: And so far, nobody has jumped on. Okay, we have our first question is from (Don Kent).

(Don Kent): Good afternoon. On Page 43 of the Policy, it uses an example, one in the Netherlands and one in Germany, of how a spatial planning can be used to a priority to speed the permitting process. And yet when Sam was speaking, I think he mentioned that this process doesn't circumnavigate any existing law.

I'm just wondering how this is actually going to get used when people in the aquaculture industry want to permit something offshore. Is the fact that we've designated 20 square miles off the coast of some part of the US as being appropriate for aquaculture - does that mean all the sudden that NEPA is lightened? That we get a conditional use permit instead of a full EIR?

Sam Rauch: So, I think that there's a couple of aspects to that question that I'd like to talk about. First in terms of the overall National Policy, there was a recognition that in order to engage in activities in the ocean, an applicant -- whether it's aquaculture or whatever -- often times has to go to a number of different Federal agencies and get a number of different permits, and that the Federal government was not working coherently together.

The coordinating and support priority objective under how we do business is intended to look at all those processes and try to streamline those activities so that we can act more consistently, we can serve the public better in terms of

getting rid of redundant authorizations. And so in terms of that aspect of your question, that is one of the priority strategic - that is one of the priority objectives that we'll be engaging in. Looking at that not just for aquaculture, but for all kinds of activities that we engage in in the ocean.

In terms of how that relates to the plans, as you did indicate, the plans do not subvert themselves any existing authority. There may well be though as we go forward, environmental documents developed with the plan - decisions that are made in accordance with the plan that will, when we get to permitting, streamline some of those activities. That is one of the benefits of the plan. It is a programmatic kind of look.

And if you were thinking about it in a NEPA context, you can think about a programmatic EIS when you look at the suite of activities in the ocean. And as long as you're already considering what's in that, you can rely on that. And sometimes, that does help streamline what you're trying to do. Not in every instance, so I don't want to say that one size fits all, but that is part of the benefit of this, is that it would provide a holistic look at the environmental impacts of all of the things that are going on in the ocean, and may in the end of the day serve to shorten some of those permitting processes. That would be one of our objectives.

Andrew Winer: Okay. Right now, there is nobody else in the queue. And, I will stall here for a moment to see if anybody would like to jump on. If the operator wants to give one last call out to how we do that, then we'll see if anybody else jumps on.

Coordinator: Once again, it is star, 1 to ask a question.

Andrew Winer: Okay. It looks like our next question is (Dave Tikaki).

(Dave Tikaki): Hi. Can you hear me?

Andrew Winer: We've got you.

(Dave Tikaki): I've got some - wondering. It kind of follows-on from the previous questioner. I'm looking at - out here in the Pacific of pushing further - I guess with back East, you guys are calling integrated multi-trophic aquaculture, and I don't think it's any secret to many of us that a lot of the progenitors to that started in Hawaiian traditional mariculture technology.

At any rate, one of the things I'm wondering about is jurisdiction. If we're talking about operations that are three miles offshore, how - you've talked about local, but how does the state fit in?

Sam Rauch: Well - so the state has - I mean, there's a number of rules preexisting that the state could fit in. The state obviously has the Coastal Zone Management Act, in which they have some ability to - there is some interaction between what happens offshore, even beyond three miles if it effects what's happening in the Coastal Zone.

It is important that the state in the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning context, that they have a voice at the table. Things that happen offshore do have effects on the shore and vice versa. It is not only important that we hear their views, but it's important that they recognize that things that they're doing onshore has effects offshore, in terms of community development, pollution, and other kinds of things. So recognizing that there's a two way street there is important.

Jurisdictionally, those are the main ways that they have a defined jurisdictional rule, but they do have a - they are a stakeholder in all these

processes as are everybody else. And it is important to try to craft these collaboratively, because much of this is going to - much of the current aquaculture currently happens within three miles, and only a very little of it happens outside of three miles. So, the states are a major player in terms of aquaculture policies within their own boundaries - their own waters.

(Dave Tikaki): Got it. Just kind of following up a bit in the issue - another query about conditional use permits, things of that nature. When you deal with say - in our case, say tropical integrated multi-tropic aquaculture, which we're still trying to get off the ground here, and awful lot of what could happen - let's say for example, if you have an existing farm operation, are there going to be mechanisms to make it easier say for example to - for that operator to start adding other biological agents?

Now whether we're talking about microalgae, (bentic) or (pelagic) creatures that will take up say for example, an ammonia plume -- what there is of it -- is the going to be like jumping through the hoops of just starting something brand new all over again with an existing structure, or can say an operator start to experiment to figure out how to recapture inputs? Now, this of course goes without saying, would lead towards more environmental if you will, responsibility as well as recapturing you know, the cost of inputs.

But right now, it seems like the environment - because every time you try something new, it's like starting from scratch. And then the few then cry as well that there is no science, because a lot of this is in a certain sense new, and definitely in the tropical environment. And yet, you've got people comparing what happens in a temperate environment that is (literal) and try to shout down what potentially what we'd like to revisit that existed a few hundred years ago.

Sam Rauch: So, I can't answer the exact question about integrated multi-trophic aquaculture in the new ages, but let me try to make it a little bit more generic. There are a number - that would be an example of one of the many of new uses for the ocean that are out there. Energy development. Wind farms and (unintelligible) are another one. New shipping lanes are another one. All of these things may be - you know, what we're trying to do here is to develop those potential new uses in a way that's consistent and to avoid conflicts in the future and find places to maximize those without unduly displacing the existing uses.

So, it does provide a forum for looking at it in that context. As I indicated before, one of our other objectives is -- not necessarily the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning but with the priority objective to coordinate better -- is to more streamline the way that we can deal with this so that you can more effectively deal with the Federal government as a single unified voice as to different - as opposed to different compartmentalized industries.

So, it is conceivable and is one of our goals to help facilitate that process. Now, I cannot say whether that would facilitate the specific use you wanted to do there, but our goal is to make the process easier to deal with, to make it more logical in terms of trying to plan for all these various uses of the ocean.

Andrew Winer: All right. Our next question is going to come from (Christina Lizzy).

(Christina Lizzy): Hi. Thank you for the call today. Going on new use questions. You talked about the precautionary principle, and I was wondering how this will be applied to experimental industries like this offshore aquaculture (unintelligible), which hasn't really been proven to be safe, and in some parts of the world, has been shown otherwise. So, how can we determine at this point where they can be placed?

And I guess also if it's part of sort of a programmatic look, will these be placed in areas without doing a full impact study?

Sam Rauch: Well, so the bottom - this doesn't displace, at least for where it's a Federal action, complying with Federal laws, which would include NEPA, which is your impact studies.

(Christina Lizzy): Right.

Sam Rauch: So, it would not displace the requirement to do such a thing to evaluate the applicability for any significant major Federal action.

In terms of evaluating and vetting the science that would support something in a fund - in precautionary principle, this is something - precautionary principle by the way, is in the policy, not in the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning. So, it applies to all Federal activities and actions, not just the planning part of it. And so, this will be applied by the various Federal agencies as they go about their - the course of their normal activities and as we try to integrate that.

In terms of applying it to the plans, that will be something that will be done by the regional planning bodies when they evaluate that. And, they will look at the various sciences, not just aquacultural but of everything, and look at applying the precautionary principle. What makes sense in that region, given the local needs of that region?

(Christina Lizzy): Okay. Great. Thank you.

Andrew Winer: Okay. Our next question is from (Frank Bloom).

(Frank Bloom): How are you doing, and thank you for allowing me a question. Precautionary principle again, and apparently, we need a couple of definitions on irreparable and serious. But, let me step down to best available science, which could be science with a very broad uncertainty and a wide confidence interval. And then from that, are we going to error on the side of conservation?

Sam Rauch: So, the precautionary approach is something that - it is not a significant departure from what many Federal agencies, including NOAA does in any event. Including irreversible and serious are terms that we deal with in many different context a lot. We - for instance in Fishery Management, we deal with scientific uncertainty in various ways.

It is important to understand what is certain and what is not, and what that means the broader the scientific uncertainty. That may mean that you take less risks, that you are more conservative. The more narrow the rings of uncertainty the more sure you are you could less than certain. I think we know how to deal with that. That is something that we do deal with every day. And, it's certainly true that you want to be in general more conservative when you are more uncertain about your effects.

(Frank Bloom): That's from one end, but on the other, those that are in the business, that tends to hurt them on that - when you're going to error always on the side of conservation. And, that makes your bad best available science always much worse for the business end.

Sam Rauch: As I said, this is a balance that we have dealt with in the ocean for many years. It is something that we deal with every day in terms of Fishery Management itself, balancing the need to support an industry, the need to recognize the importance that an industry has to coastal economies and social

structures, with the needs to make sure that the ecosystem on which that industry is based is healthy and vibrant. This is just another ramification of what traditionally do in terms of the Fishery Management context.

(Frank Bloom): All right. Thank you for allowing the question.

Andrew Winer: Okay. our next question will be from (Gary Whalen).

(Gary Whalen): ...providing me the opportunity to provide a couple of questions, which are linked. I'm in the Great Lakes region. I'm really curious on what your envisioned interactions are between a long-term existing Fisheries organization, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and your regional entities? And, I also would like to know, which since this is linked, given that there are no Federal waters in the Great Lakes -- all waters are owned by the states and the Province of Ontario -- how this will affect the envisioned role of these regional groups here in our area.

Sam Rauch: Yes. So, the policy does outline the Great Lakes as a regional - as one of the regions that has a regional planning body. And, the states clearly have a very strong role in that. There is a Great Lakes Commission that I think we are looking at to be the rudiment or the basis, or even the regional planning body itself. There is still Federal decisions that go on on the Great Lakes, even though the waters are state territorial waters.

We want to make sure that when we are - when both the states and the Federal government are jointly exercising their authorities that they do that in a concerted effort. But, we do recognize that the states are a very key player in that, and any sort of marine spatial - or coastal plan in the Great Lakes has to have the state's buy in and support and authorship or it's not going to proceed.

(Gary Whalen): Thank you very much.

Andrew Winer: Okay. Our next question is from (James Sparrow).

(James Sparrow): Hi. And thank you for having this call. My question is about how this ocean policy was coalesced with the new aquaculture - marine aquaculture policy that NOAA is developing. That's sort of the first part of the question. Is just sort of wondering what you all envision including in the marine aquaculture policy that will include or integrate some of these components of the Ocean Policy?

And secondly, kind of what the role that you mentioned for the councils might be through that process? And, if that's something that you intend to lay out in the Marine Aquaculture Policy?

Sam Rauch: So, this is Sam Rauch again. So, the - as you were aware, I think you've participated in some of the listening sessions we've had on the aquaculture policy. We will make the - the National Ocean Policy is just that. It is the Administration's - it is the National Ocean Policy. It dictates what NOAA is going to do.

NOAA's aquaculture policy, for those of you who are not familiar, we are developing a policy on aquaculture. It will support the National Ocean Policy. It will be based on the National Ocean Policy. The National Ocean Policy will drive what's in the aquaculture policy as is appropriate.

We are still developing that policy. We have engaged in a lot of stakeholder input and review. There's been numerous listening sessions around the country. It is a lot of material to go through. We're developing that. We hope to issue a draft of that sometime soon. I can't say what is going to be in that draft or not yet, but it will tie off of the National Ocean Policy.

(James Sparrow): Okay. I guess the reason for that question was looking at NOAA's policy for aquaculture; in the past obviously it was real sort of focused on this National imperative that aquaculture is important. And while that's not the subject of debate at all here, I'm just sort of wondering what - I mean, I think this kind of tiers off of (Don Kent)'s questions about some of the spatial planning.

I mean, are thinking that we're going to - with this National policy that you'll be looking at with the Marine Aquaculture Policy, that we'll be looking at how to site facilities in a way that you know, increase the benefits of all these different offshore activities when you're outside of the traditional areas that we're doing this right now? As we move offshore, I'm just sort of wondering if there's some guidance there that'll come in this Ocean Policy, which I have not read the document.

But, is there some sort of guidance about you know, what facilities can be where? What types of activities we're going to be thinking about having in different locations?

Sam Rauch: So, the National Ocean Policy - the coastal areas of the United States are large and diverse. This National Ocean Policy does not go into details about any of the geographic elements of this coast and say this particular area is suitable for this or not. That is something that is left up to the regional planning bodies to deal with.

Our hope is that the regional planning bodies will look at all current and future uses, and make recommendations as to the kind of things that are appropriate in various areas in order to maximize not only the uses, but also the health of the ecosystem on which those uses rely.

So, that is something - that - looking at the various uses around - in these specific geographic areas is something that the regional planning bodies will be doing. How exactly they decide to do that, there are different ways to go through that analysis. If we looked at the various Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning efforts that are underway around the world right now, they are all done a little bit differently. And even in the United States, the way that they're doing it are being done a little bit differently.

So, there are different ways that will meet different local and regional needs. All of them though would envision looking at the various uses that the region wants to engage in, and trying to figure out where the best places to do those things are, what makes the most sense, how you can maximize opportunities.

(James Sparrow): Great. Thank you. And then maybe the role for the Council. Do you think you could expand on that a little? I don't want to take up too much of your time.

Sam Rauch: Well as you know, that's a critical part of the aquaculture policy that NOAA's looking at, and we have not resolved those issues at this point.

(James Sparrow): Okay. Great. Thank you.

Andrew Winer: Okay. The next question is from Peter Becker.

Peter Becker: Good afternoon. Thank you. On behalf of the Pacific Aquaculture Caucus, which is holding a National Conference and Workshop on Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture next - September 14 and 15 in Port Angeles, Washington, I do want to note that we are hoping that many of these issues can be raised as part of that workshop, particularly in the West Coast context.

But not limited to the West Coast context simply because integrated multi-trophic aquaculture is something that can be applied both inland and in coastal zones, and in the open ocean in the future, and should be by our lights, but certainly as open and necessary to have at it discussed - and in forums and workshops such as the one we're having today.

I do want to note however that as we talk about this, the rest of the world has simply marched ahead. Integrated multi-trophic aquaculture and aquaculture in general has expanded in the rest of the world, and there's certainly many examples of how it can be done properly, successfully, and in an environmentally appropriate way, as well as in an economically appropriate way. They both have to operate hand in hand.

I hope the plan will at least recognize those things and that we can continue these discussions at things such as the workshop in September here in Port Angeles. But the National Plan as it stands certainly seems to address many of the issues, or leave the areas open to regional discussion.

Sam Rauch: Can I...

Peter Becker: Also note that the State of Alaska has come up with a very successful plan for community based -- and that is at the desire of the community base -- aquaculture program. So, I think that we need to look at even inside of our 50 states, at programs where success has been obtained, either by designating zones or working with the communities to bring those practices at the behest of the community. Thank you.

Sam Rauch: Right. I would just encourage - particularly, working with the Pacific regional planning body as it gets formed and operated, to make sure that your views are expressed. The best way to help guide the process is to participate in the

process. And so, your participation in that would be key to helping achieve the end result that you desire.

Andrew Winer: Okay. Our next question will be from (Amy Hammer).

(Amy Hammer): Hi. This is (Amy Hammer). A couple of questions. A couple of them are definitional, if you can expand on a little bit. One is the best available science definition. You know, I mean is our definition peer reviewed or social science? You know, what is that piece you're talking about? It's also with you giving control to the local imperative that you seem to be moving to here. Are you sort of giving up commerce's ability to do consistency rulings under CZMA?

And then I guess the other is sort of a question of logic. It follows the question of these other kind of practical plans. How do you see the Councils working with something like - well take for instance the Gulf Plan that that Council is bringing forward. That's one that - from one of your fishing councils. Or, something like we had originally proposed in California for a pilot science study. I mean, how do you see those - the nuts and bolts of how that moves forward with the councils? Step 1. Step 2. How do you start?

Sam Rauch: Okay. So, I think there is three parts to that question. The first one is the best available science, which is a term that is used in numerous statutes. It does not mean that the science has to be peer reviewed. It is whatever science is available. And, many agencies have policies as to what best available is, and there's a hierarchy of what is better than others.

Clearly, peer reviewed science -- when it's available -- is a lot better than anecdotal stories or information. But, the requirement is that you use what's

available and you use the hierarchy of what's best. It doesn't mean it has to be peer reviewed in order to be used though.

In terms of the CZMA review, this - the Coastal Marine Spatial Planning and the Policy does not change any of the existing legal authorities of any of the agencies. NOAA is not giving up its ability - its function to deal with consistency reviews. It's not dealing with its ability to manage fisheries. Interior is not giving up its ability to manage energy issues.

The one thing that we are committing to do is to try to work more closely with other Federal partners and other state partners in order to streamline those processes so that we are working as partners as opposed to divergent individual entities.

The third part of the question is how the councils are going to interact on any issues. Let me just take it out of the aquaculture context. As we indicated, the councils have unique regulatory authority in terms of fishing management. They also have a lot expertise to bring to the table in terms of science, studies, resources to bring to the table. They are key partners.

They have a unique role in the Federal Ocean Management structure in terms of they actually recommend in a very formalistic way, Fishery Management regulations to the Department of Commerce. They need to be a part of the process in some fashion. They need to - just like we talked about with the states in terms of the Great Lakes Fishing Commission. This process will not work without the Council's strong involvement in the process.

So, I do envision that they will be part of the process in terms of designing the plans themselves, and then implementing them on the back end. If there is agreement about what should happen with the councils and the plan designers,

I think a lot of the other little more jurisdictional questions or technical questions will be resolved. The key is -- as I am advocating for you -- is for them to be involved in the process. And we've talked with them, and I think they will be.

Andrew Winer: All right. Our next question will come from (Paul Zayjack).

(Paul Zayjack): Good afternoon. I've got two questions. How would the aquaculture industry gain a seat to the table at these regional bodies? And then, the National Ocean Council I see has 6 to 12 months to develop strategic action plans for these priority objectives. When would we see that come out? And, will that - will this sort of strategic action plan have in it the identification or description of the elements that would have to be in these coastal zone - or coastal management - or Coastal Marine and Spatial Planning documents?

Sam Rauch: So on the first question about a seat at the table, the plan author - the people who are on the regional planning body will be jurisdictional regulatory entities. The Federal agencies, the states, the tribes, perhaps the councils. However - so, they will be the ones charged with doing the plan, but the requirement is, is there is a robust open stakeholder process. So, there will be opportunities for stakeholders to be involved and to be contributing to that.

The - but that opportunity - I can't tell you exactly how that's going to work, because that will be developed by the regional bodies themselves, with oversight of the Federal government. So, be vigilant to the ones that you are interested in and make sure that you offer your opinion at the Federal government the task of the National - NOC is to make sure that those processes exist.

In terms of the elements in the CMSP, the NOC is going to be identifying - providing broad guidance to the regional bodies as to what should or should not be in these various plans. Whether a particular industry is addressed is going to be something that the regional needs to put on the table. Part of the reason that we're starting from the bottom-up approach is various regions have different views as to what's important in their ocean environment. They need to be - they need to put those on the table as to what it is they want to address.

We want holistically, all the things - them all to be addressed. But identifying what is the primary uses of the ocean area is going to be a regional bottom-up approach. So, I do not think that the Federal - I don't know yet, because we haven't seen it. I do not anticipate that the Federal directive will be deal with this industry in this manner. Rather, it will say make sure there's a process for the region to identify which industries are important, and then we will set that process down. I think that's how it will likely occur.

Andrew Winer: Okay. At present, there are no other questioners in the queue. We've only got a couple of minutes left. We probably have time for one more question if somebody wanted to jump on. And, I'm going to see if anybody does that. And, it doesn't like anybody is.

So at this time, I would like to thank all of you for joining - oh, somebody got in just under the wire here. So last question of the - well, we got three. We're going to have to end this, so - in about two minutes, so we can actually only take one more question. So, we're going to take (Ethan Lucas) and then we will be signing off after that. So (Ethan).

(Ethan Lucas): Hi. Thank you very much. I just had one quick question, and maybe you happened to mention it at the beginning of the program, but is there a way for

us who have attended this meeting to get a copy of your presentation for referencing later?

Andrew Winer: Let me answer that. This is Andy Winer. We'll be posting those online hopefully by next Tuesday, together with the Q&As.

(Ethan Lucas): Okay. Great. Thank you.

Andrew Winer: And at this point, I think we're at the end of our time, so we're going to be signing off at this point. And, wanted to thank all of you for joining us this afternoon. We really appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about the new National Ocean Policy and to get some further questioning. We will be interacting with you I'm sure over the coming months, and we welcome the opportunity to do that. So, thank all of you. Have a great weekend, and we will talk to you later. Bye.

Coordinator: Thank you. This concludes today's conference call. You may disconnect at this time.

END