

Ocean Policy Committee Meeting Summary September 29, 2020

Background: Pursuant to President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 13840, “Ocean Policy To Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States,” the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) met on September 29, 2020, to coordinate current and proposed actions of the committee and its subcommittees. The OPC co-chairs, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Chairman Mary B. Neumayr and Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Director Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, facilitated the meeting. A summary of the meeting is provided below.

➤ **Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping**

In November 2019, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum (PM) titled “Ocean Mapping of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and the Shoreline and Nearshore of Alaska” to advance our understanding of our oceans and coastlines; streamline permitting relating to our ocean exploration activities; and support America’s future prosperity, health, and national security. Specifically, under the PM, President Trump directed:

- Section 2: The co-chairs of the OPC, working through the Ocean Science and Technology (OST) Subcommittee, to coordinate the development of a strategy for mapping, exploring, and characterizing the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ);
- Section 3: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), coordinating with the State of Alaska and the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC), to develop a strategy to map the shoreline and nearshore of Alaska; and
- Section 4: The OPC, working through the Ocean Resource Management (ORM) Subcommittee, to recommend actions to increase the efficiency of the permitting process for ocean research, mapping, and characterization activities across Federal agencies.

In June 2020, pursuant to the PM, the OPC released two products, the “National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone;” and “Recommendations for Increasing the Efficiency of Permitting for Ocean Exploration, Mapping, and Research Activities.” In addition, NOAA, in coordination with the State of Alaska and AMEC, released the “Mapping the Coast of Alaska: A 10-Year Strategy in Support of the United States Economy, Security, and Environment” which is a strategy to map the Alaska shoreline by 2030.

Pursuant to Section 2 of the PM, the “National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone” identified strategic goals and objectives and called for the establishment of the National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization (NOMECE) Council to coordinate agency policy and actions and to support collaboration with non-government partners and stakeholders. The NOMECE Council was established this summer and is co-chaired by Dr. Alan Leonardi, Director of Ocean Exploration and Research at NOAA, Rear Admiral Shep Smith, Director of Office of Coast Survey at NOAA, and Dr. John Haines, Program Coordinator of the Coastal and Marine Hazards and Resources Program at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). NOMECE Council co-chair Dr. Haines provided an update on the NOMECE Council and specifically discussed some of the Council’s responsibilities including drafting the

Implementation Plan for the National Strategy; supporting partnerships with organizations that are promoting, investing in, or developing ocean methodologies, technology, and applications; examining opportunities to maximize non-Federal participation; and involving the public.

Pursuant to Section 3 of the PM, the “Mapping the Coast of Alaska: A 10-Year Strategy in Support of the United States Economy, Security, and Environment” outlined four strategic goals. RDML Tim Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, provided an update regarding NOAA’s activities including drafting the Alaska Coastal Mapping Implementation Plan; expanding coastal data collection; leveraging innovation in mapping technology development; and conducting strategic communications to promote widespread engagement, including an Alaska Coastal Mapping Summit.

Pursuant to Section 4 of the PM, “Recommendations for Increasing the Efficiency of Permitting for Ocean Exploration, Mapping, and Research Activities” identified three goals and nine actions for implementation. ORM co-chair Mr. Karnig Ohannessian, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Navy for Environment, provided an update on the ORM’s work including developing an “Implementation Plan for Recommendations for Increasing the Efficiency of Permitting for Ocean Exploration, Mapping, and Research Activities” and discussed the milestones and metrics contained in the Implementation Plan.

➤ **National Oceanographic Partnership Program – Year-in-Review**

The National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) is an existing collaboration of Federal agencies that facilitates partnerships that can help further advance the Administration’s priorities and expand our ocean science and technology (S&T) enterprise. Dr. Tom Drake, Head, Ocean Battlespace Sensing, Office of Naval Research, provided an update which highlighted recent NOPP funding levels and discussed Federal ocean S&T priorities.

➤ **Proclamation on Revision to the United States Marine Scientific Research Policy**

On September 15, 2020, President Trump issued a Presidential Proclamation titled, “Revision to United States Marine Scientific Research Policy.” The State Department is directed to lead implementation of this Proclamation, in consultation with relevant departments and agencies and with the OPC. Dr. Benjamin Purser, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans, Fisheries, and Polar Affairs, provided an update regarding the revisions.