

September 12, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: John P. Holdren
Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
Co-Chair, National Ocean Council



Nancy Sutley 
Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
Co-Chair, National Ocean Council

SUBJECT: National Ocean Policy Implementation Guidance for the FY 2013 Budget

I. Introduction

Executive Order 13547 establishes a comprehensive, integrated National Policy for Stewardship of the Ocean, our Coasts, and the Great Lakes (National Ocean Policy). The National Ocean Policy (NOP) recognizes that America's stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes is intrinsically linked to environmental sustainability, national prosperity, and national and homeland security. It directs Federal agencies to implement Policy under the guidance of a National Ocean Council (Council). Among other things, the National Ocean Policy directs Council Co-chairs to develop, in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, an annual interagency ocean budget guidance memorandum. This memorandum provides guidance on National Ocean Policy implementation budgetary priorities for fiscal year 2013.

Implementation of the National Ocean Policy is in the early stages. This memorandum presents initial budget priorities as they are known at this time. It is intended to set the stage for more detailed budget guidance to follow in future annual memoranda as implementation develops and when Strategic Action Plans are completed, which address each of the nine National Priority Objectives.

II. Prioritizing Key National Ocean Policy Implementation Activities

Recognizing the current budget climate, each Council department, agency, and office should re-evaluate how resources are allocated in light of the overarching policy goals vis-à-vis their existing statutory and regulatory mandates. In that light, focus should be on eliminating redundancy, encouraging innovation and efficiency, and evaluating and prioritizing ongoing and emerging activities. Any options presented for expanded capabilities should be firmly grounded in foundational elements of the National Ocean Policy and funded within the agency's overall funding level described in the OMB Director's 2013 Budget guidance letter of August 17th. Council members are encouraged to identify opportunities which will enable leveraging existing resources.

Council departments and agencies should explain in their budget submissions how they will direct limited FY 2013 resources, as appropriate and consistent with their mission, to support implementation of the Policy's National Priority Objectives. This support includes ensuring availability of priority data sets to support development of the National Information Management

System (NIMS) and data portal for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) as part of initial development of data and information needs to broadly support National Ocean Policy implementation. Council members involved in Regional Planning Bodies (RPB) should also explain how they will support and build capacity for the RPBs, whose primary responsibility will be to undertake the CMSP process and to ultimately develop regional CMS Plans.

Increased public understanding of the value of the ocean, our coasts, and Great Lakes will build a foundation for enhanced National Ocean Policy implementation. Council departments, agencies, and offices should integrate NOP outreach and communication efforts into existing or future public outreach activities where applicable.

Council departments, agencies, and offices should also pay particular attention to those interagency efforts addressing significant issues in the Arctic region due to its rapidly changing conditions and increasing strategic importance, and in the Gulf Coast region as part of the restoration efforts following the Deepwater Horizon spill. Council agencies should indicate in their FY 2013 budgets how resources will be directed to support ongoing Administration place-based stewardship efforts in these regions. Additional emphasis in these two regions connected to advancing the goals of the National Ocean Policy may serve to secure more tangible Council results in the near term.

III. Program Guidance

National Priority Objectives

The National Ocean Policy describes an implementation strategy centered on nine National Priority Objectives (see Appendix). Responsibilities for addressing these objectives will be outlined in a strategic action plan (SAP) for each, expected to be completed early in calendar year 2012. These plans will serve to focus the collective implementation efforts of each of the Council members around discrete actions.

- As these plans are not yet complete, the proposed budgets of Council departments, agencies, and offices when applicable should demonstrate programmatic connection with overarching priority objective obstacles, opportunities, and key areas each plan is required to address.
- While the SAPs currently are under development and subject to public review, the development process should help inform Council budget priorities for FY 2013, particularly as SAPs will be completed--and initial implementation will be occurring--in FY 2013.
- Specifically, Council departments and agencies should indicate in their FY 2013 budget submissions, as appropriate, at least three key activities they will continue or undertake to further the nine National Priority Objectives, with emphasis on activities with strong interagency coordination and collaboration¹. These activities may include, but are not limited to, the areas of emphasis as listed under Section II of this memorandum.
- Council departments and agencies are also encouraged to indicate those activities that cut across SAPs, contributing to implementation in more than one area.

¹ The NOC recognizes some NOC member agencies, such as Joint Chiefs of Staff, do not have line item budgets and thus are unable to comply with this provision.

Data and Information Management

The National Ocean Policy calls for the development of a NIMS and data portal to support CMSP. As the coastal and marine spatial planning process moves forward, additional data needs will be identified that cannot be fulfilled by existing data collection efforts. Additionally, in support of achieving the National Priority Objectives, development of methods for sharing data and information may be necessary.

- Council departments and agencies should ensure their budgets maintain their information and data assets, (including scientific, management, and technical information), ensure accessibility through the web, and be consistent with Federal standards and NIMS guidance.
- Council departments and agencies should ensure their budgets clearly take into account the need for resources to ensure easy access to data, while laying necessary groundwork for long term commitment to responsible data maintenance.

IV. National Ocean Council Operational Support

To adequately support implementation of National Ocean Policy initiatives in FY 2013, the Council has identified essential operational support requirements. These include, but are not limited to, funds for Governance Coordinating Committee member meetings (e.g., travel), Council staff travel, stakeholder outreach, including meetings and other materials, and planning and execution of any remaining regional coastal and marine spatial planning workshops. The Council will follow up with individual Council departments and agencies pursuant to this section regarding specific amounts required.

Appendix

National Priority Objectives

How We Do Business: *These objectives represent overarching ways in which the Federal Government must operate differently or better improve stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes*

- 1. Ecosystem-Based Management:** Adopt ecosystem-based management as a foundational principle for the comprehensive management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.
- 2. Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning:** Implement comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based coastal and marine spatial planning and management in the United States.
- 3. Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding:** Increase knowledge to continually inform and improve management and policy decisions and the capacity to respond to change and challenges. Better educate the public through formal and informal programs concerning the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.
- 4. Coordinate and Support:** Better coordinate and support Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Improve coordination and integration across the Federal Government and, as appropriate, engage with the international community.

Areas of Special Emphasis: *These objectives represent a substantive area of particular importance to achieving National Policy, including addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.*

- 1. Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification:** Strengthen resiliency of coastal communities and marine and Great Lakes environments and their abilities to adapt to climate change impacts and ocean acidification.
- 2. Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration:** Establish and implement an integrated ecosystem protection and restoration strategy that is science-based and aligns conservation and restoration goals at the Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional levels.
- 3. Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land:** Enhance water quality in the ocean, along our coasts, and in the Great Lakes by promoting and implementing sustainable practices on land.
- 4. Changing Conditions in the Arctic:** Address environmental stewardship needs in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent coastal areas in the face of climate-induced and other environmental changes.
- 5. Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations, Mapping, and Infrastructure:** Strengthen and integrate Federal and non-Federal ocean observing systems, sensors, data collection platforms, data management, and mapping capabilities into a national system and integrate that system into international observation efforts.