

Ocean Policy Committee

Readout of the June 1, 2023 Ocean Policy Committee Meeting

The Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Brenda Mallory, and the Director of Climate and Environment at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Dr. Jane Lubchenco, convened the fifth meeting of the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) of the Biden-Harris Administration. The agenda for the meeting included establishing the Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP), implementing the Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP), and developing ocean co-use data.

OPC members were briefed on and held an initial discussion about how the ORAP will advise the OPC. The ORAP was tasked by Congress to advise the OPC on policies and procedures to implement the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP); matters relating to national oceanographic science, engineering, facilities, or resource requirements; improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the ocean sciences and related fields; national ocean research priorities; and any additional responsibilities that the OPC considers appropriate. ORAP meetings will be publicly noticed in the *Federal Register*, including opportunities for public participation.

The OPC discussed implementation of the newly released OCAP, including how to track and report agency progress, address challenges, and facilitate coordination and cooperation across agencies and departments. During the meeting, the OPC invited all departments and agencies to participate in the Ocean Justice Strategy writing group.

The OPC also discussed the four actions that the OCAP directed to the group, including development of:

- 1) an ocean justice policy;
- 2) engagement tools to help all non-USG ocean interests participate more effectively in coastal and ocean management;
- 3) financial and other technical tools to facilitate tribal, territorial, and Indigenous participation in coastal and ocean management; and
- 4) ocean science and technology priority actions needed to implement the OCAP.

As directed by the OCAP, members of the OPC are currently in the process of drafting the Ocean Justice Strategy, which OPC anticipates issuing in late 2023. A Request for Information on the Ocean Justice Strategy is available in the *Federal Register* at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/06/08/2023-12271/ocean-justice-strategy>. Comments were accepted through 11:59 p.m. Eastern

Time on July 24, 2023. CEQ and OSTP, as co-chairs of the OPC are conducting Tribal Consultation and engagement with Territories and Indigenous Peoples, to help inform the Ocean Justice Strategy. The Strategy will in turn inform implementation of OCAP action items #2 and 3, above.

The OPC discussed working with NOPP and the National Ocean Mapping Exploration and Characterization Council (NOMECC), which both report to the OPC, to implement OCAP-specific priority topics. The Ocean Science and Technology Subcommittee has begun the process of identifying priorities for OCAP Science and Technology implementation, as well as new opportunities for interagency facilitation, high-level summits, and broad stakeholder engagement. That work will continue along a number of fronts, including a NOPP Ocean Life Forum in August.

The Ocean Co-Use Workgroup co-leads from NOAA and BOEM provided updates on the work to date regarding data development, interagency partnerships, and continued engagement in ocean co-use efforts. NOAA and BOEM, as co-chairs of the Marine Cadastre, have coordinated the development of new spatial data sets that present unexploded ordinance, fisheries, and wave climatology that support wind energy development, aquaculture siting, shipping, beach nourishment, and other ocean activities. The OPC asked the Ocean Resource Management (ORM) subcommittee and the Ocean Co-Use Workgroup to develop a scope of work to advance the utility of the Marine Cadastre and related data management and decision-making tools to support tribal, Territorial, and Indigenous interests.

The ORM National Strategy Work Group provided updates on the National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, including notice that a Request for Information soliciting public comment will be published in the Federal Register in June. That notice is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/03/2023-15982/request-for-information-national-strategy-for-a-sustainable-ocean-economy>, and comments were accepted through 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 28, 2023. The OPC is developing this plan in consultation with Federally-recognized Tribes and input from governments, civil society, the private sector, and the public.

Lastly, the OPC received update on ocean month engagements and communications, including the President's Proclamation on National Ocean Month (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/05/31/a-proclamation-on-national-ocean-month-2023/>), and an overview of the Coastal Resilience Interagency Working Group (CR-IWG), established by the National Climate Task Force in July 2021.

OPC membership is comprised of the following Departments, Agencies and Offices:

Departments

- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Defense
- Secretary of Energy
- Secretary of Homeland Security
- Secretary of Justice
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of the Interior
- Secretary of Transportation

Executive Office of the President

- Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor
- Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
- Assistant to the President for Economic Policy
- Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism
- Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Representative from the Office of the Vice President

Agencies and Service Branches

- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
- Chair of the Committee on Maritime Transportation Systems
- Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the of the Army Corps of Engineers
- Chief of Naval Operations
- Commandant of the Coast Guard
- Director of the National Science Foundation
- Executive Director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate