Overview of the Ocean Policy Committee

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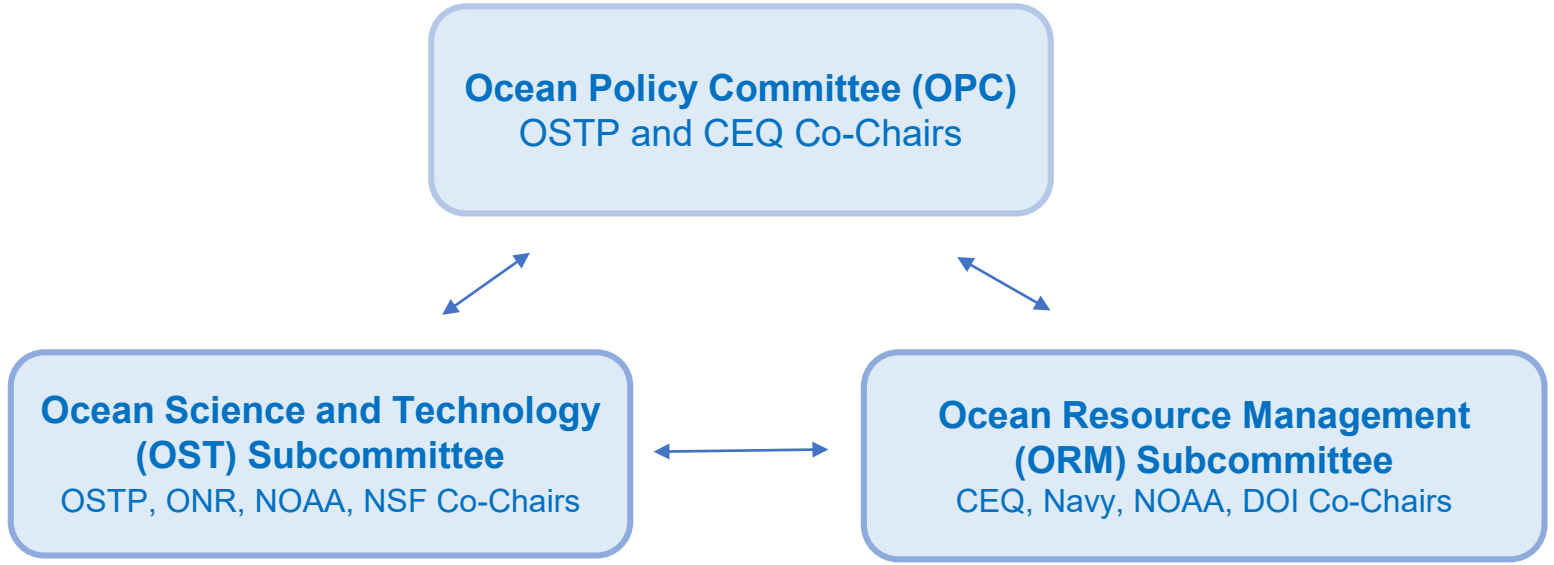
Ocean Policy Committee

- Congress established the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) in 2021 for the Biden Administration, through the National Defense Authorization Act, to coordinate federal actions on ocean-related matters
- Every President since George W. Bush has relied on a body to coordinate ocean policy across the agencies
- The OPC is directed to:
  - Engage and collaborate with the ocean community on ocean-related matters,
  - Facilitate coordination and integration of Federal activities in ocean and coastal waters to inform ocean policy,
  - Identify priority ocean science and technology needs, and to
  - Leverage resources and expertise to maximize the effectiveness of Federal investments in ocean research

Ocean Policy Committee

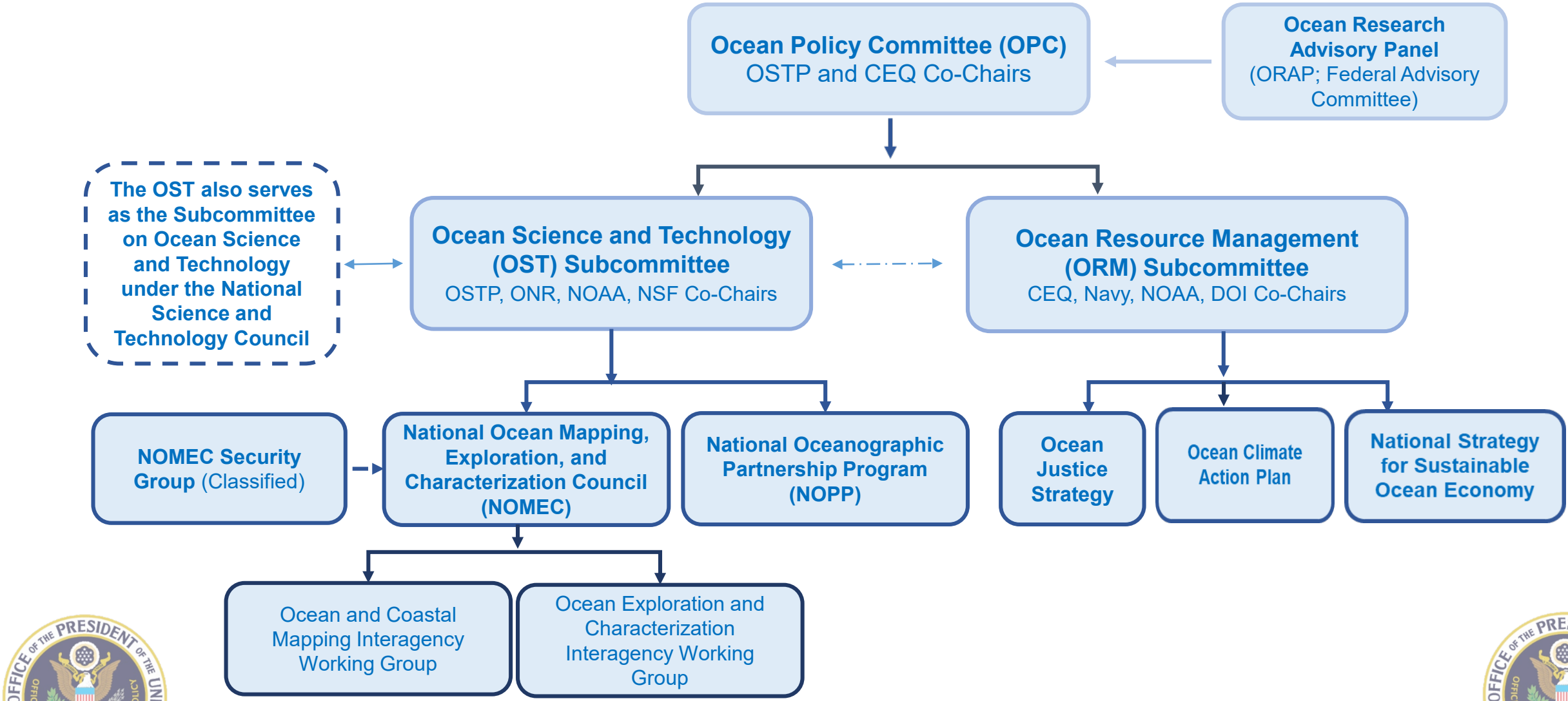
Member Agencies Include:
Department of State
Department of Defense
Attorney General, Department of Justice
Department of Interior
Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Transportation
Department of Energy
Department of Homeland Security
Environmental Protection Agency
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
National Science Foundation
National Intelligence
Joint Chiefs of Staff
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Army Crops of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
Executive Office of the President:
- Council on Environmental Quality
- Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Office of Management and Budget
- National Security Council
- Domestic Policy Council
- National Economic Council
- Office of the Vice President



Ocean Policy Committee Co-Chairs:
Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
Arati Prabhakar, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Director of OSTP

Deputy Co-Chairs:
Jane Lubchenco, Deputy Director, Climate and Environment, OSTP
Sara Gonzalez-Rothi, Senior Director for Water, CEQ

Ocean Policy Committee



OPC Action Plan

- Ocean Climate Action Plan
- National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy
- Ocean Justice Strategy
- Strengthen U.S. Science and Technology (S&T) Enterprise
- National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization
- National Oceanographic Partnership Program

Ocean Resource Management Subcommittee

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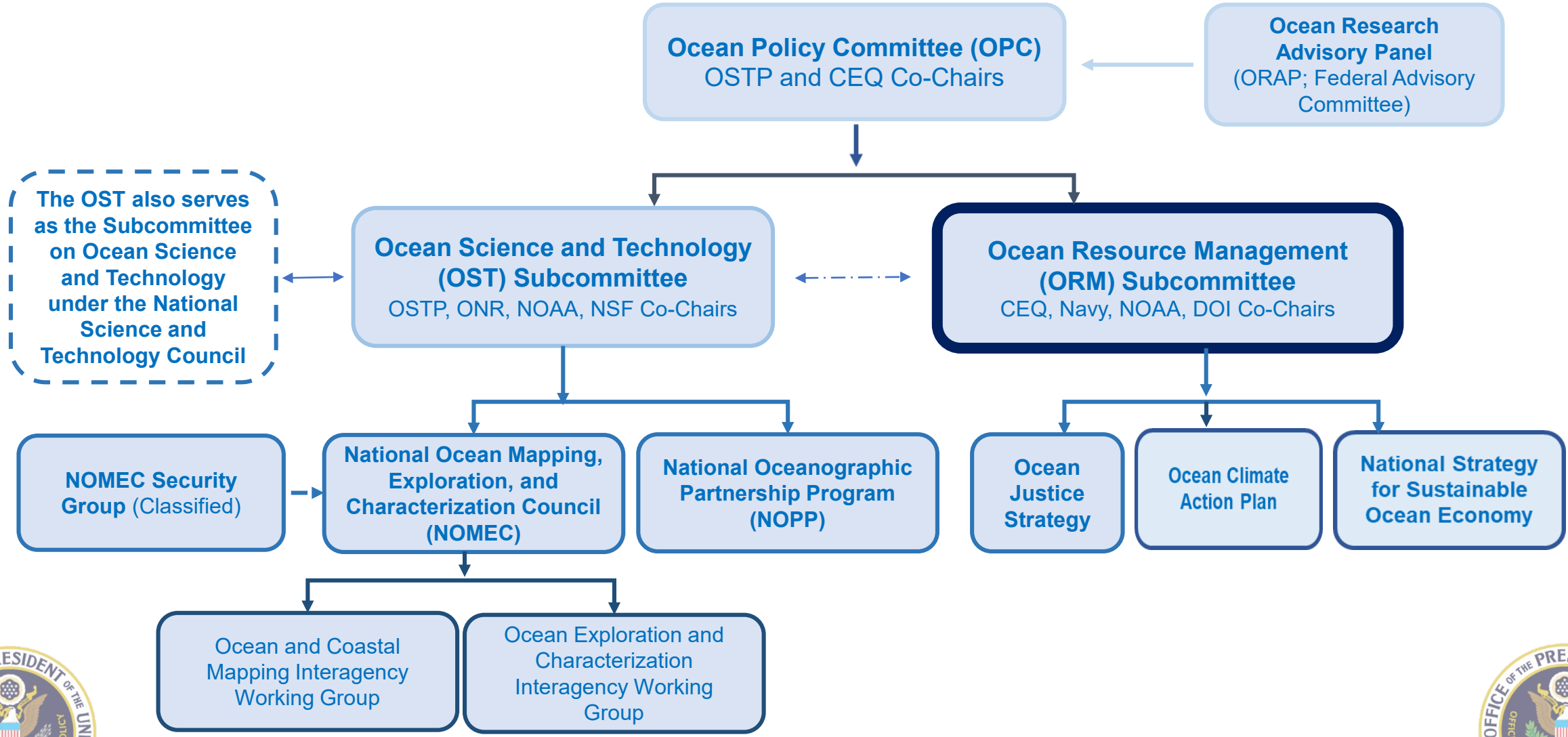

ORM Overview

- The Ocean Resource Management (ORM) Subcommittee focuses on topics and actions that address regulatory and policy coordination associated with coastal and ocean management.
- The goals of the ORM are to:
  - Support regulatory and policy coordination associated with coastal and ocean management, including engagement with regional ocean partnerships and stakeholders
  - Address data and information needs to support Federal and regional coastal and ocean management, including collaboration with regional ocean partnerships and stakeholders
  - Address Federal and regional ocean-related matters that may require interagency or intergovernmental solutions

ORM Workplan

- Ocean Climate Action Plan Implementation
  - Released in March of 2023
  - Three main goals:
    1. Create a carbon-neutral future, without emissions that cause climate change and harm human health
    2. Accelerate solutions that tap the power of natural coastal and ocean systems to absorb and store greenhouse gases, reduce the climate threat, and protect communities and ecosystems against unavoidable changes
    3. Enhance community resilience to ocean change by developing ocean-based solutions that help communities adapt and thrive in our changing climate
  - The OCAP maps out eight priority actions to achieve these goals—including increasing offshore wind and marine energy, decarbonizing the maritime shipping sector, conserving and restoring coastal and marine habitats that naturally store carbon ("blue carbon"), and expanding protected areas in the ocean ("marine protected areas")—to enhance resilience of ocean ecosystems that provide food, jobs, recreational opportunities, cultural identity, and more.

ORM Workplan

- Ocean Justice Strategy – Identifies barriers and opportunities to fully integrate environmental justice principles into the federal government's ocean activities.
  - Inputs include feedback from OPC departments and agencies, a Federal Register Notice to gather public input, a Tribal Consultation, a roundtable with the U.S. Territories and Native Hawaiian Organizations, and the first-ever virtual Summit on Ocean Justice.
  - Highlights overarching goals, principles, and practices that the Federal Government can adopt in order to provide long-term, sustainable benefits for people, communities, and the environment.
  - 3 recommendations aimed at Federal Government:
    1. Embed Ocean Justice in Federal Activities
    2. Develop a Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive, and Accessible Federal Ocean Workforce
    3. Enhance Ocean Justice through Education, Data, and Knowledge

ORM Workplan

- The Ocean Policy Committee is coordinating the development of the National Strategy in conjunction with the United States' participation in the "High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy"
- The U.S. has committed with 17 other nations to develop sustainable ocean plans for their marine areas under national jurisdiction.
- This initiative aims to advance the prosperity, health, and security of participating nations through the sustainable management of their marine areas, and to provide a range of examples that can be considered as potential models by other nations.
- The U.S. National Strategy will serve as a sustainable ocean plan for the purposes of the Ocean Panel initiative.

ORM Workplan

The National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy will:

- Describe a vision and goals for achieving healthy ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems that support healthy people and communities and sustainable economic production and prosperity;
- Characterize and assess needs and opportunities to achieve the vision and goals;
- Identify existing and new high-level actions by Federal, Tribal, state, territorial, regional, and local governments that can advance sustainable management; and
- Describe how those actions will be implemented to engage and build on the work of and partnerships with civil society, the private sector, and the public.

Ocean Science & Technology Subcommittee

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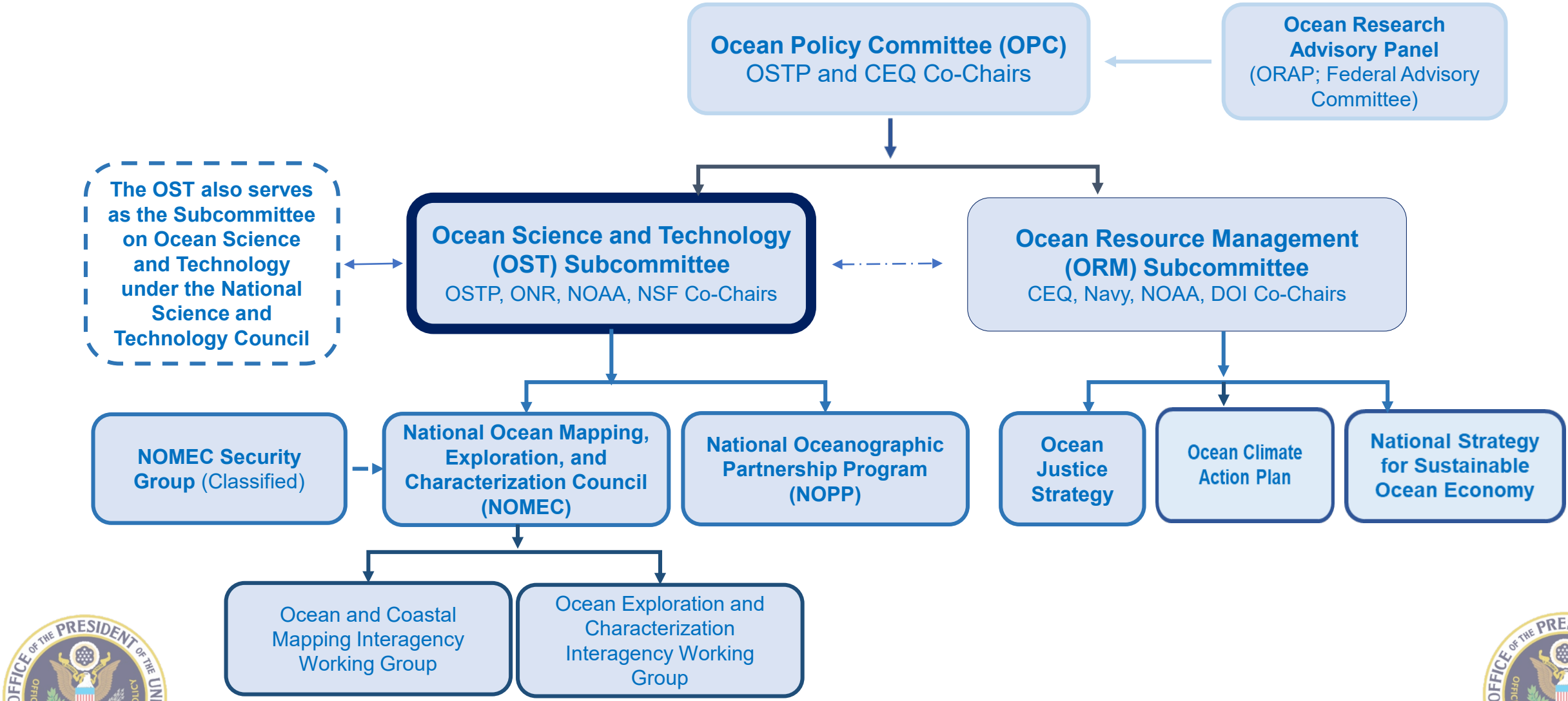


OST Overview

- The Ocean Science and Technology Subcommittee (OST) addresses ocean science and technology issues across the agencies
- The OST can work in concert with, and provide science to support the policy aims of, the ORM
- The OST's functions are performed by the National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST)
- The OST is co-chaired by NOAA, the Office of Naval Research (ONR), National Science Foundation (NSF), and OSTP

OST OPC Workplan

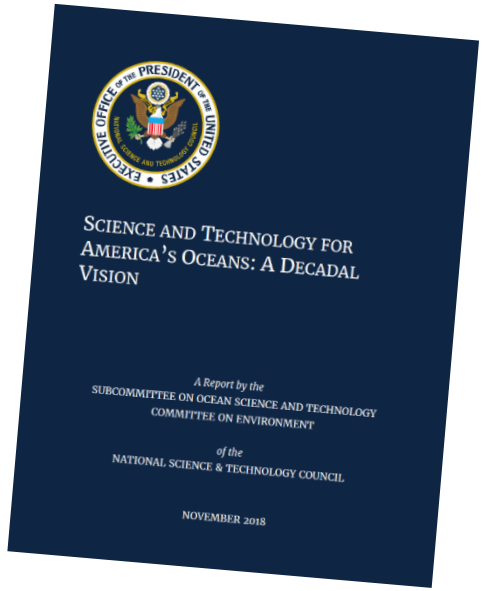
- Strengthen U.S. S&T Enterprise
- National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization
- National Oceanographic Partnership Program

OST Interagency Actions

- Meet congressional mandates and reporting requirements to the Hill
- Robust engagement with non-governmental stakeholders and presence at scientific and external events
- Platform for coordination in managing new funding opportunities (BIL/IRA)
- Ocean Climate Action Plan S&T Implementation
  - mCDR FTAC
    - Stood up a new NSTC Chartered committee
    - Developing implementation plan (2024)

Longstanding History

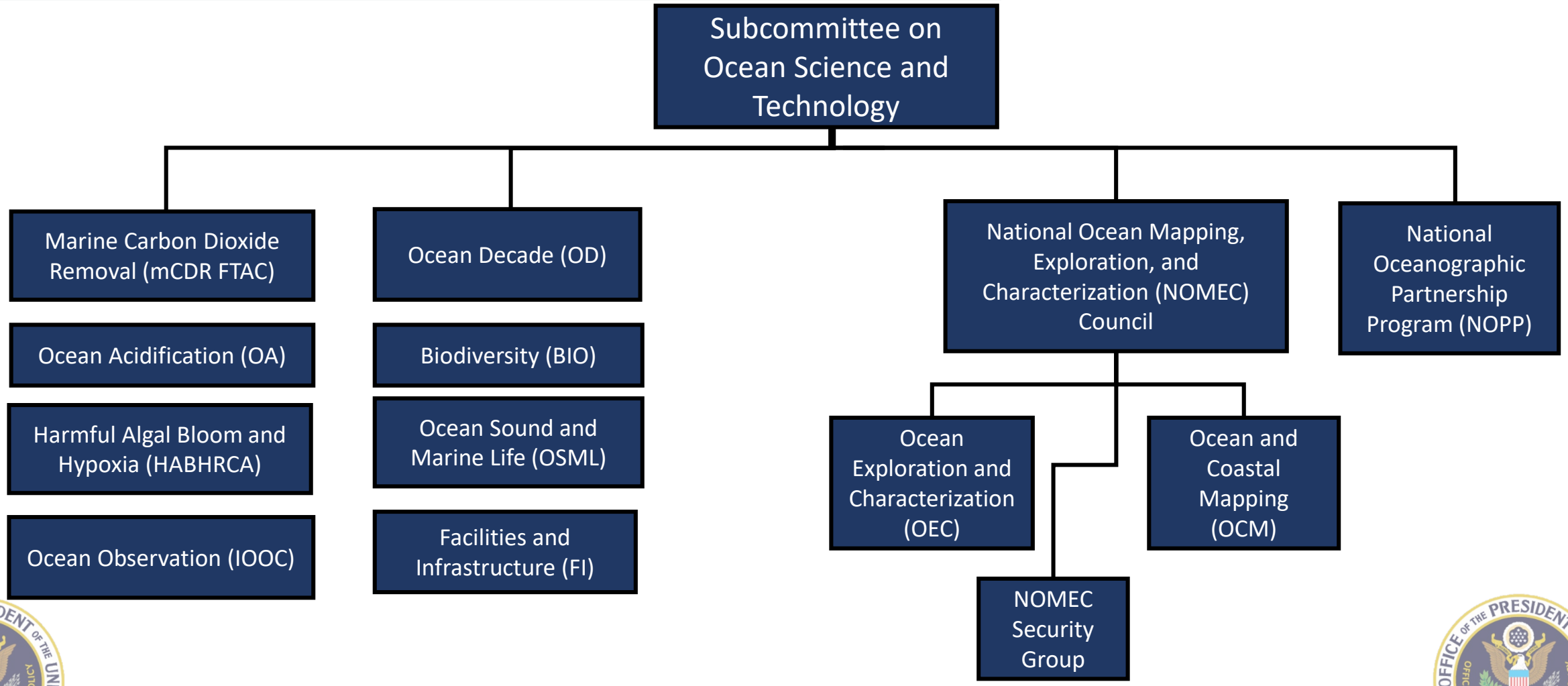
- 2003: The NSTC created the **Joint Subcommittee on Oceans** (JSO)
- 2004: Release of the **U.S. Ocean Action Plan**, converting the JSO into a new Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST)
- 2007: Release of the Ocean Research **Priorities Plan** (ORPP)
- 2009: JSOST evolved into the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (**SOST**)
- 2013: Updated ORPP document released
- 2018: White House S&T Summit and release of ***A Decadal Vision***
- 2022: ***Opportunities & Actions*** *for Ocean S&T* released



Benefit of Interagency S&T Coordination

- Identifies ocean science and technology **priorities**
- Fosters and facilitates interagency coordination of **disciplinary** and **interdisciplinary** ocean research, ocean technology, infrastructure development, and global ocean observation and mapping programs
- Contributes to both **Federal goals and agency missions**
- Efforts **expand knowledge**, provide **advice**, and offer **recommendations** regarding the advancement of ocean science and technology across the Federal government and with the broader community

Robust Interagency Network



Congressionally Mandated IWGs

- **Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification (IWG-OA)**
  Created by the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-11 § 12,401), which tasked the SOST to establish the IWG-OA and coordinate Federal ocean acidification activities. Co-Chairs: NOAA
- **Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping (IWG-OCM)**
  Established in 2006 to facilitate the coordination of ocean and coastal mapping activities and codified by the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-11 § 12,201). Also reports to the National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization (NOMEC) Council to implement the Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping. Co-Chairs: USACE, NOAA, USGS, OSTP
- **Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (IWG-HABHRCA)**
  Created by the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-383 § 601) and carried forward in the HABHRCA reauthorizations of 2004 (Pub. L. 108-456), 2014 (Pub. L. 113-124), and 2017 (Pub. L. 115-423, § 9). The IWG-HABHRCA facilitates coordination across Federal agencies to address and report on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in the United States, including the assessment of impacts and development of strategies for prevention, mitigation, and control. Co-Chairs: NOAA, EPA, OSTP
- **Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IWG-IOOC)**
  Created by the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-11 § 12,301) and reauthorized in the Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020 (Pub. L. 116-271) to
  - (1) “Establish and sustain a national integrated system of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes observing systems… that includes in situ, remote, and other coastal and ocean observation and modeling capabilities, technologies, data management systems, communication systems, and product development systems;”
  - (2) “Improve the Nation’s capability to measure, track, observe, understand, and predict events related directly and indirectly to weather and climate, natural climate variability, and interactions between the oceanic and atmospheric environments, including the Great Lakes;”
  - (3) “Sustain, upgrade, and modernize the Nation’s ocean and Great Lakes observing infrastructure to detect changes and ensure delivery of reliable and timely information;” and
  - (4) “Authorize activities to promote basic and applied research to develop, test, and deploy innovations and improvements in coastal and ocean observation technologies…and to conserve healthy and restored degraded coastal ecosystems.” Co-Chairs: NOAA, NSF, NASA, OSTP

Non-Congressionally Mandated IWGs

- **Interagency Working Group on Biodiversity (IWG-BIO) Biodiversity**
  Collates information about biological research and monitoring that could contribute to federal agencies' information needs; assists in improving best practices for storage and access to marine biological data; facilitates communication on vulnerable deep-sea ecosystem issues; works to integrate satellite data products with in-situ biodiversity observations to increase understanding and abundance organisms and ecosystem integrity. Co-Chairs: NOAA, NASA and BOEM.
- **Interagency Working Group on the Ocean Decade (IWG-OD)**
  The mission of the IWG-OD is to coordinate Ocean Decade activities across the Federal government and to support the elevation of Ocean Decade activities to agency leadership. Co-Chairs: State, NOAA, and NASA.
- **Interagency Working Group on Facilities and Infrastructure (IWG-FI)**
  Advises on policies, procedures, and plans relating to ocean infrastructure uses, upgrades, and investments. Co-Chairs: ONR, NOAA
- **(IWG-OSML)** Identifies research to fill important data gaps and develops processes to integrate the best available information into risk assessments and decision-making processes regarding the ocean soundscape and its impacts on marine life. Co-Chairs: DOE, ONR

Recent Ocean S&T Activities

- IWG-NOPP FY 22 Report to Congress
- IWG-Ocean Exploration and Characterization (OEC)
  - Strategic Priorities for Ocean Exploration and Characterization of the U.S. EEZ
- IWG-Ocean Acidification (OA)
  - Seventh Report on Federally Funded Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Activities
  - Strategic Plan for Federal Monitoring and Research of Ocean Acidification
  - Ocean Chemistry Coastal Community Vulnerability Assessment
- IWG-Biodiversity (BIO)
  - eDNA Strategy (in development)
  - National Biodiversity Strategy (in development)

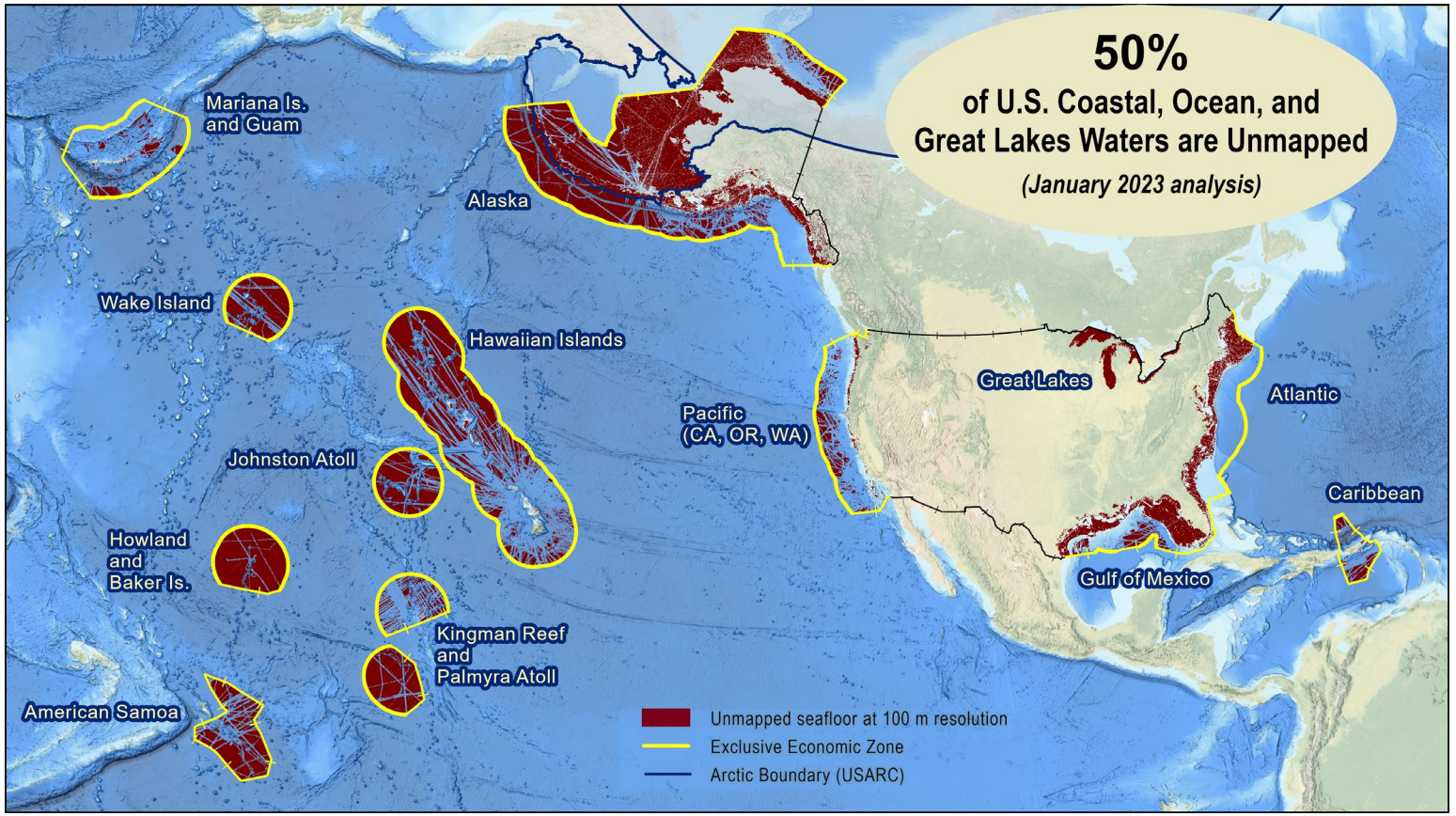
Opportunity for ORAP

Emerging industries in the ocean economy – the Ocean Policy Committee respectfully requests that the ORAP advise on areas of opportunity for partnership (such as through the National Oceanic Partnership Program) on the topic of emerging technology (which could include Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, eDNA, and similar technology) with ocean industry and other sectors over the next 5-10 years.

National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization Council

National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization (NOMEC) Council

- NOMEC Council established September 2020
- U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is larger than all 50 States combined
- NOMEC Council includes members from 11 Federal Agencies; Co-Chairs from NOAA and USGS
- Growing emphasis on public engagement and building Nation-to-Nation relationships with Tribal governments



National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization (NOMEC) Council

- Implementation Plan released January 2021
- Mapping Goal: Map U.S. deep waters (>40 meters) by 2030 and shallow waters (<40 meters) by 2040
- Complements international efforts such as the Seabed 2030 project and the 30 x 30 effort (protect 30% of U.S. land and water by 2030)
- *Ocean exploration* provides a multidisciplinary first look at an unknown or poorly understood area of the seafloor, sub-bottom, and/or water column and an initial assessment of an area's physical, chemical, and biological characteristics.
- *Ocean characterization* provides comprehensive data and interpretations for a specific area of interest of the seafloor, sub-bottom, and/or water column, in direct support of specific research, resource management, policymaking, or applied mission objectives.

Questions

Thank you