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**Statement of James L. Connaughton
on the release of the
Preliminary Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**

April 20, 2004

“President Bush is firmly committed to sound management and effective conservation of our ocean and coastal resources to meet our Nation’s environmental, economic, and social goals and our Nation’s legacy of ocean stewardship.

“With the release of the preliminary report from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, we have reached an important milestone in our efforts to better understand and manage our Nation’s vast ocean and coastal resources. On behalf of the Administration, I commend Admiral James D. Watkins for his outstanding leadership of the Commission. We sincerely thank him and all of the Commissioners for their diligent work on this important endeavor.

“The Ocean Commission has now sent the preliminary report to the Governors of all states and territories for their review and comment. This step in the process is critical to ensuring that this discussion is responsive to local needs. I encourage all Governors to take this opportunity to provide comments to the Commission on the preliminary recommendations. We await, with great interest, the submission of the Commission’s final reported recommendations to the President and Congress.”

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