

Chairman James Connaughton  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Chairman Connaughton,

Our nation's living ocean ecosystems are in danger of collapse. But under President Bush's leadership we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really make a difference and leave our children a legacy of healthy oceans full of life. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, authorized by the Oceans Act of 2000 and appointed by President, recently presented its final report. The Commission found that our ocean ecosystems have been dangerously degraded by over fishing, pollution and poorly planned coastal development. The good news is that there is hope. Solutions are at hand. The Commission's final report calls for bold but common sense actions to improve the stewardship of our oceans. This includes a strong federal agency to implement a new ocean policy aimed at improving the management of our oceans. A National Oceans Council should help coordinate this policy among all federal agencies. The Commission also recommends an ecosystem-based approach to ocean management, reform of fisheries management, and better coordination with the states on a regional level. The President has the opportunity to make a tremendous positive difference in the future health of our oceans. I urge the Administration to act now through administrative action and by proposing legislative changes to Congress to fully implement the Commission's recommendations.

Sincerely,