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N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Blue Frontier Campaign * Conservation Council for Hawai'i *
Conservation Law Foundation * Gulf Restoration Network *
Marine Fish Conservation Network * Ocean Champions *
Northeast Great Waters Coalition * Ocean River Institute *
Pacific Environment * People for Puget Sound *
Restore America's Estuaries * Surfrider Foundation *
Turtle Island Restoration Network**

Conservation Groups Applaud National Ocean Policy

Capitola, CA - Yesterday the Obama administration unveiled the country's first comprehensive National Ocean Policy to better protect, maintain and restore our nation's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. This policy is the culmination of a year-long process that started when the President convened the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force in June of 2009. The Policy announced today "serves as a model of balanced, productive, efficient, sustainable, and informed ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes use, management, and conservation within the global community."

"The fact that the Obama administration embarked on the development of a National Ocean Policy a year ago shows the desire they have to provide better long-term management and ecosystem protection," said Pete Stauffer, Ocean Ecosystem Project Manager for the Surfrider Foundation. "We commend President Obama's leadership and now call on Congress and our Great Lakes and coastal state governors to support the National Ocean Policy and work to implement the policy," adds Marjorie Ziegler, Executive Director for the Conservation Council of Hawai'i.

Our nation's oceans, coasts, islands and waterways are central to our quality of life, providing not only recreation, sport and sustenance, but a powerful engine for the economy. America's ocean economy supports millions of jobs and contributes more to GDP than the entire U.S. farm sector. Commercial and recreational fishing alone generated \$185 billion in revenue in 2006, supporting about 2 million jobs.

Nothing has highlighted our nation's dependence on healthy oceans and coasts like the current BP oil spill disaster. "This catastrophe points out that the United States can and must do a much better job to protect and manage our oceans in a way that is not based on a single sector approach to management," says Sean Cosgrove, Marine Campaign Director for the Conservation Law Foundation. "The National Ocean Policy is an integral part of the Administration's response to the

Gulf oil spill to ensure better environmental protection and reduction of cumulative impacts to ocean and coastal ecosystems,” adds Kathy Fletcher, Executive Director of People for Puget Sound.

While an ocean policy would not have stopped the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster from occurring, a strong National Ocean Policy would have improved the situation by providing necessary oversight and coordination in advance of a disaster, improved protection of ecosystems and natural resources and created an integrated approach to management that includes enforcement of the varying ocean uses.

“The nation can now look to the National Ocean Policy to provide a guiding vision for all federal agencies and a needed mandate for the future protection and restoration of our coasts, oceans, islands and Great Lakes,” concludes David Wilmot, Ph.D., President and Co-Founder of Ocean Champions.

The Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, July 19, 2010, can be found at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf

Ocean Champions is the only nonprofit political organization that endorses pro-ocean Congressional candidates and lobbies members of Congress on behalf of the oceans. To learn more about Ocean Champions or any of the candidates endorsed by Ocean Champions, visit www.oceanchampions.org.