



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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POLICYMAKERS, SCIENTISTS, ENVIRONMENTALISTS, FISHING INDUSTRIES TO DISCUSS PARTS OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S OCEAN ACTION PLAN

Head of NOAA to Speak at Conference

Retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator will address participants at the "Managing Our Nation's Fisheries" second conference in Washington, D.C. Lautenbacher will deliver a keynote speech on March 25 at 8:00 a.m. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

During the three-day conference, participants will lay a foundation for how the United States can implement the Bush Administration's Ocean Action Plan, released Dec. 17, 2004. Panel topics include: NOAA's movement toward ecosystem-based management of our oceans, expanding the use of market-based quota programs, strengthening marine science and management and developing marine managed areas. Fish stock rebuilding and fisheries governance will also be discussed.

These topics are priority issues highlighted by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy during its three-year review of current ocean management in the United States. The Bush Administration's U.S. Ocean Action Plan, an initial response to the Commission's final report, identifies short-term priorities and establishes a vision for long-term advancements in U.S. ocean policy. Conference participants represent policymakers, scientists, fishermen, environmentalists and the general public.

"Integrated science, expanded research and collaborative policymaking are the core of the president's plan for stabilizing American fisheries, protecting marine ecosystems and ensuring a promising future for our commercial and recreational fishing industries," said Lautenbacher. "With input from policymakers, scientists, fishermen and environmentalists, this conference promises to offer a road map for how we can work together to achieve the president's vision."

The Administration's budget request to Congress for FY06 includes funding to implement initiatives in the Ocean Action Plan, including \$1 million for the regional fishery management councils to develop individual fishing quota programs, and increased funding for fishery assessments, socio-economic studies and vessel monitoring systems. The president requested an additional \$1.5 million for coral protections.

“The U.S. Ocean Action Plan calls for common-sense ways to advance America’s ocean policies: strengthening our understanding of the oceans, improving existing regional fisheries management and coordination, and adopting market-based management strategies,” Lautenbacher said.

The “Managing Our Nation’s Fisheries” second Conference will take place at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street, Washington D.C., March 24-26. Pre-registration is required. The conference agenda, list of panelists, press releases, and registration information is available on the conference Web site, www.managingfisheries.org.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to providing and preserving the nation’s living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: www.noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

Managing Our Nation’s Fisheries Conference: www.managingfisheries.org

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy: www.oceancommission.gov

U.S. Ocean Action Plan: <http://ocean.ceq.gov/actionplan.pdf>