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July 9, 2002

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy  
1120 20<sup>th</sup> Street N.W.  
Suite 200 North  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Admiral Watkins and Commissioners,

I attended the U.S. Oceans Commission's Northwest Regional Public Meeting (Seattle, Washington) and would like to comment on the need for more scientific research on our oceans and the wildlife and organisms they support. At the Seattle meeting, the need for a better scientific understanding of our oceans was iterated not just by scientists, but also by resource managers, commercial fishermen, those in the sea food industry, and environmental organizations. I believe there is consensus that management decisions regarding our oceans need to be based on sound science, not economics or political will. Science-based decisions, however, are not possible if the science does not exist. Data collected in a crisis situation or as an afterthought cannot provide a foundation for sound decision-making regarding our ocean and its resources.

The science needed to make good decisions concerning such diverse ocean topics as stewardship of fisheries and marine life or extraction of offshore oil and gas can only be collected in a systematic large-scale manner. I suggest that the U.S. Commission on Oceans Policy recommend the creation of a dedicated program that supplies long-term funding for independent researchers to study our oceans and its resources. This ocean-specific federal grants program could be modeled after grant programs administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health or the Federal Government's National Science Foundation. Money drives science. If we want to use science to make the best decisions possible regarding our oceans and the wildlife and organisms they support we need to dedicate long-term federal funding towards their study.

Sincerely,

Joseph K. Gaydos, VMD, PhD  
Staff Scientist and Veterinarian



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