

**Public Comments on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's
Preliminary Report**

Topic Area: Human Health

Comments Submitted by:

- Brendan Williamson, Petaluma, California

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To Whom It May Concern:

I whole-heartedly agree with the statement made in the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy “Significant investment must be put into developing a coordinated national research effort to better understand the links between the oceans and human health, with research aimed at discovering new drugs and other useful products derived from marine organisms, and detecting and mitigating outbreaks of disease and other harmful conditions. Efforts must also be aimed at improving public awareness about how pollution and waste can contribute to the spread of seafood contamination and disease and can decrease the diversity of species that provide new byproducts (Park VI, Chapter 23).”

From my experience, it is true that many people are very ignorant towards the source of many medicinal drugs. I myself am very environmentally aware of the biological and ecological impacts caused by the extraction of certain organisms from ocean waters. Yet, there is still so much information about this topic that I have yet to learn. Until then, I too will continue to unknowingly pollute waters with waste. I would love to know more about how I can limit my ecological footprint on marine systems. The only problem I have is with finding the information, which can assist me in making these life changes. It is this information that needs to be made aware to the public. Otherwise the current trend of pollution and waste release will continue to increase.

I’m not exactly sure what the best possible way would be to spread this information to the public, but I feel that this ocean policy is a good start. I feel that this policy takes into account almost all the issues that need to be considered in marine conservation, and will really help the public understand more of what is occurring in the oceans.

As a science major at Sonoma State University in California, I am surrounded by scientifically related subjects on a daily basis, and so as a result I came across this article. Unfortunately I do not hear any mention of this document outside of the university. This tells me that a good majority of the community in which I live in is unaware of these issues. I feel that this is a good indicator for a means of intense advertisement of this document to the public. If this occurs, I’m positive that all of the concerns mentioned in this paper, especially medicinal drugs, would gain more support; and as a result, people would become much more environmental aware and therefore gain a better appreciation for the fragility of marine ecosystems.