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## **SEAWEB APPLAUDS CREATION OF NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – SeaWeb today applauded the Obama administration’s formal announcement of a national ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy. Today’s landmark effort seeks to provide a comprehensive structure for managing multiple uses in the ocean, ranging from oil and gas extraction and exploration to recreation and much more. The policy also is designed to help rebuild struggling fisheries and to protect endangered species; protect and restore vulnerable habitats from industrial harm; stop stormwater runoff from contaminating beachwater; and to stop the spread of invasive species.

“While all eyes are on the ocean as a result of the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, it’s appropriate that we acknowledge the forward-looking approach that the administration has taken to developing a comprehensive plan for managing our ocean, coasts and Great Lakes,” said Dawn M. Martin, president of SeaWeb. “This administration came into office knowing that the ocean was in need of triage. A year ago they saw a tangle of more than 140 different and often conflicting laws and regulations managed by more than 20 agencies. After considerable stakeholder engagement and much thought, they have presented a sensible framework to begin to untangle this regulatory jumble. This national ocean policy will enable us to be smart about the way we interact with our ocean, allowing us to protect sensitive ecosystems—which are in more dire need now than ever—and still fish, ship and develop renewable energy in a way that minimizes the impact on the environment and maximizes the return.

“This policy is a victory no matter your economic or personal interest in our ocean. There’s no doubt the ocean needed some good news; now that ocean health and ocean use are on the same level, it has it. Many previous administrations have failed to act, but now the government has stepped up and set the stage for creating the ocean equivalent of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act,” said Martin.

In June 2009, President Obama ordered the heads of executive departments and federal agencies to establish an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, which was led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The task force was charged with developing a policy that ensured the protection, maintenance and restoration of the ocean, coasts and the Great Lakes. The task force was also to recommend a framework for improved stewardship and effective coastal and marine spatial planning. Six months later in December, the task force submitted a draft proposal for a marine spatial planning framework that is included in the final national ocean policy released today. The policy is a culmination of many years of work that first began with two national ocean commissions established in 2003 and 2004.

“This policy provides a coordinated vision for the multiple economic uses, ecosystem services and benefits from the ocean. However, in order for these plans to offer the landmark protections for the ocean that are envisioned, we must work together to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the issues surrounding monitoring and enforcement,” said Martin. “So many jobs in this country and so much of our economy is tied to the ocean in some way. Taking this significant step today not only is the environmentally responsible thing to do, but it also is the economically sound thing to do.”

SeaWeb is an international nonprofit communications organization dedicated to creating a culture of ocean conservation. SeaWeb works collaboratively to inform and empower diverse ocean voices and conservation champions in strategic, targeted sectors to encourage market solutions, policies and behaviors that result in a healthy, thriving ocean. SeaWeb transforms knowledge into action by shining a spotlight on workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean such as climate change, pollution and overexploitation. [www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org).

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