



Executive Office of the President
Council on Environmental Quality



Executive Office of the President
Office of Science and Technology Policy

What They Are Saying | Trump Administration's Efforts to Advance Ocean Exploration

Recently, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Director Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Chairman Mary Neumayr, as Co-chairs of the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC), announced three strategies and recommendations on advancing ocean exploration. For more details, please see the fact sheet on the announcement [here](#).

Here's what the ocean community is saying in response:

VICTOR VESCOVO, Founder and Owner, Caladan Oceanic LLC:

"I've been quoted saying that government can't, and shouldn't, do everything, but partnerships with government like ours at Caladan Oceanic with NOAA could achieve amazing results that neither of us could do alone. We look forward to employing our resources, including the world's only full ocean depth-capable submersible, Limiting Factor, to greatly advance our knowledge of the deep oceans."

DR. ROBERT D. BALLARD, Principal Investigator, NOAA'S Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute:

"The Lewis and Clark Expedition began in 1803 and when it was completed it was followed by the opening of the West, which completely changed America's economy; making it the great powerhouse of the world that it is today. America is now embarking upon an equally historic series of expeditions over the next ten years to explore the 50 percent of America that lies beneath sea; the results of which will have an equally important impact on America's economy and its National Defense."

EDWARD SAADE, President, Fugro:

"Fugro has long recognized the critical importance of ocean mapping, exploration, and characterization to sustainable economic development, national security, and conservation activities. You can't manage what you don't know and with only 40 percent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone currently mapped, we are excited about the strategies and recommendations released by the White House last week in support of the November 2019 Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping of the U.S. EEZ and the Shoreline and Nearshore of Alaska. Fugro has supported other national mapping programs around the globe and hope to leverage our latest innovations in autonomous solutions, remote command and control and artificial intelligence in cross-sectoral partnerships that support these bold and ambitious efforts in the United States."

SEAN FOWLER, Director of Business Development, Ocean Infinity:

“This collaboration with NOAA is an exciting step in the use of marine robotics to deepen our understanding of, and connection with, the oceans. At Ocean Infinity, our innovative approach of simultaneously deploying multiple marine robots ensures that we rapidly and responsibly gather extremely high quality information from the oceans. The use of our technological expertise combined with leading NOAA scientists will improve our knowledge of oceans in even the most remote environments.”

DR. MARGARET LEINEN, Director, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Vice Chancellor, University of California-San Diego:

“Exploration of the ocean is key to understanding our earth, our ocean, and the life that inhabits them. Further knowledge of the ocean is crucial to supporting America’s Blue Economy, U.S. national security, environmental management, and innovations for a more sustainable and prosperous future. Frankly, the ocean is having a ‘moment’ and it is encouraging to see the U.S. take leadership in ocean exploration and develop a vision for the role science and technology will play in exploration. Mapping and exploring the ocean floor and improving ocean observations also complement the priorities for the upcoming United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which aims to provide a framework to ensure that ocean science can support sustainable management of the ocean on a global scale.”

DR. MARK ABBOTT, President and Director, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution:

“The release of the National Strategy for Mapping, Exploration, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Council on Environmental Quality is a welcome step towards elevating support for and visibility of the importance of the ocean to our nation’s economic and national security and stewardship of a healthy ocean. The Strategy’s emphasis on the role of science and technology and the multidisciplinary focus on exploring and assessing physical, biological, chemical, and geological characterization throughout the full depth of the ocean, from the surface to and in the seafloor, including the relatively unknown “twilight zone,” is critical to guiding balanced policy, management, and conservation decision-making. The push towards building a national enterprise of federal and nonfederal partners is essential given the size and multiple users and stakeholders in the EEZ and coastal waters. Additionally, recognition of the importance of data collection, management, and sharing is critical to advancing our capacity to model and forecast changes in Earth and ocean processes, including catastrophic hazards such as extreme weather, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes. We look forward to engagement in the development of implementation plans that help move these strategies forward to benefit the nation and the health of the ocean.”

**DR. LARRY MAYER, Professor and Director, Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping
University of New Hampshire:**

“The new National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the U.S. EEZ represents the recognition of the critical role that our oceans play in sustaining life on earth and supporting our Nation’s economy and security. Its call for complete mapping of the U.S. EEZ through better coordination of efforts, advancement of technologies, and enhanced partnerships offers a viable roadmap to provide the foundational knowledge essential to understanding, managing, and protecting the vast parts of America (larger than the combined area of all 50 States) that lie offshore. Only when we complete this task will we be able to say we have truly mapped and explored America.”

DR. JYOTIKA VIRMANI, Executive Director, Schmidt Ocean Institute:

“Strategies for improving our ability to characterize, map, and explore the ocean are critical to national and global initiatives. We have an opportunity to make lasting impact, and want to ensure that the United States contributes to the understanding and protection of the marine environment. The Office of Science and Technology Policy's approach will enhance this nation’s ability to advance scientific discovery for the benefit of all.”

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI (AK):

“Alaska has more coastline than all other U.S. states combined, but 86 percent of our coast lacks the mapping data needed to address the rapid changes impacting remote communities, maritime navigation, and natural resources. The Trump administration’s Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy is welcome news and will help fill those gaps. Alaska will also benefit from the administration’s plan to map the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, as the Arctic remains woefully under-mapped and reliant on outdated navigational charts. The strategies to map, explore, and characterize the coastline and EEZ are important steps towards supporting our coastal zone and ensuring safe, successful navigation in the far north.”

SENATOR ROGER WICKER (MS):

“Our oceans play a vital role in maintaining our national security and stimulating U.S. economic growth, yet they remain vastly under observed. Mapping, exploring, and characterizing the ocean provides essential information that allows us to maximize the benefits of our water and coastal resources and learn more about the depths of the unknown. I am pleased to see the Trump Administration’s work to advance ocean exploration.”

SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN (AK):

“As we encounter a changing Arctic, Alaska’s unique position, along with its abundant coastline, places the United States at the forefront of opportunity. Strategically,

understanding the vital roles of the Arctic and Alaskan coastlines, and their profound impacts on climate and weather, transportation, and natural resources is imperative. I applaud the Trump administration for establishing a national strategy for mapping and understanding the Exclusive Economic Zone – which is long overdue and welcome news for Alaska.”

CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG (AK):

“Healthy oceans are essential to Alaska’s economy and way of life. Developing a deep understanding of our waters and ocean geography is critical for the protection of our environment and the countless mariners who make their living from the sea. I have been a long-time advocate for ocean mapping and exploration, and am very grateful to Co-Chair the House Oceans Caucus with my good friend, Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici. This Congress, I was very proud to see our Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System (ICOOS) Act pass the House, and will keep advocating for passage in the Senate so that the Integrated Ocean Observing System can continue being our eyes and ears in the ocean. There is much work to still be done on behalf of our oceans, but this announcement of policy recommendations by OSTP is good news as we continue to discover the untapped potential of our waters. I want to thank President Trump and the Administration for taking the issue of ocean mapping seriously. Ensuring that the Arctic, the EEZ, and other marine areas are fully mapped and navigable will continue to be one of my highest priorities; our economic prosperity, national security, and environmental health depend on it.”

###