Dear Under Secretary Lubchenco and Assistant Secretary Strickland:

As you are aware from our recent transmittal of recommendations, the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) was established by Executive Order 13158 in 2003 to advise the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) on the design and implementation of a National System of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Based on the MPA FAC’s recent discussions about Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning, we wanted to share our thoughts about how the work of the MPA FAC broadly overlaps with the objectives laid out in the *Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning*.

The National System of MPAs, and MPAs in general, will be an integral part of the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) initiative. Both are place-based approaches to ocean management, and include assessments of multiple ocean uses; science-based decision-making; interactive state, tribal, local governments and stakeholder engagement; and long-term evaluation and adaptive management.

The MPA FAC comprises 30 stakeholders who represent different geographic regions, including the Great Lakes, US Territories, and Pacific Islands. We represent a range of ocean interests, including resource management (state, territory and tribal), science (economics, anthropology and marine sciences), cultural heritage (archeological sites and sacred places), policy (environmental and social) and industries (commercial and recreational fishing, energy production, shipping and ports, and recreation and tourism).
The Departments of the Interior and Commerce recently charged the MPA FAC to provide recommendations on three issues that directly link the National System of MPAs and CMSP efforts:

- the role the National System of MPAs plays within the broader CMSP initiative;
- steps needed to ensure that conservation is sufficiently addressed within regional coastal and marine spatial plans; and
- how DOC and DOI can build spatial data decision support tools and conservation planning processes to develop the National System of MPAs to inform CMSP.

As the Departments move to implement the President’s National Ocean Policy and CMSP initiative, we recommend building upon these functional linkages and integrating the products and ongoing work of the MPA FAC. In the next few months, we will work to provide the Departments with recommendations on these issues and encourage you to share these with the Council on Environmental Quality.

Sincerely,

Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler
Chair

Attachment:
MPA FAC Charge