



June 13, 2011

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Room 6811
14th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr Lubchenco:

The NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) has reviewed and approved the report, "Strategic Advice on Designing and Implementing Coastal and Marine Spatial Plans" during our conference call May 16, 2011. We are transmitting the report to you and recommending it to your consideration. The report was prepared by the SAB Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group (ESMWG).

The ESMWG established a Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) subcommittee to review and assess a representative set of 17 CMSP examples from around the world (including plans and national frameworks). Its aim is to offer findings and recommendations from these efforts to assist NOAA and the National Ocean Council (NOC) in the development of CMSP regionally and nationally in the United States. To accomplish this task, the ESMWG surveyed these planning efforts and evaluated them based on published literature, interviews with plan leaders, and experience from the subcommittee members who have had direct involvement in planning efforts. The subcommittee examined as well, the broader body of published works on CMSP in the process of evaluating evidence, and developed findings and recommendations.

The ESMWG review, findings and recommendations are focused on seven key categories central to the development of CMSP: (i) objectives, (ii) scope, (iii) authority, (iv) participants, (v) data, (vi) decision support and (vii) performance measures. Across these categories, we identified 23 recommendations for NOAA's consideration. Among those recommendations, we bring to your attention the following:

1. NOAA and NOC should support the development of regional science and stakeholder teams that can help develop operational objectives (with indicators and reference levels) early in the CMSP process.
2. Prior to funding, NOAA and NOC should require a work plan and clear timeline with benchmarks for all phases of the CMSP effort. In particular, timelines should be set and adhered to for data gathering and compilation to allow sufficient time in the planning effort for analysis and decision making.

3. NOAA and NOC should provide basic guidance to regions on stakeholder roles, responsibilities, and engagement strategies. These should be defined early in the process to avoid confusion.
4. NOAA and the NOC should provide guidance on best practices for the use of decision-support tools; there is a growing body of lessons learned and best practices available from recent planning efforts. NOAA and the NOC should support the development of decision-support tools and, in particular, the connections among tools; most plans used more than one tool. NOAA and the NOC should support the development of more explicit trade-off analysis tools.
5. NOAA and the NOC should require plans to explicitly identify formal metrics of success including metrics for social and economic outcomes. NOAA and the NOC should identify permitting time and costs as useful metrics for gauging the results of CMSP efforts; they should undertake efforts now to gather information on some current permitting times and costs ahead of regional CMSP efforts. This action would clearly indicate to stakeholders that CMSP aims to address economic concerns in addition to ecological ones.

The SAB encourages NOAA to incorporate these recommendations into the CMSP process. Because NOAA is already engaged in developing a CMSP process, we also request that the response from NOAA to these recommendations be made before the end of this calendar year.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Ban
Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board
Consultant, Weather Industry & Government Partnerships

Attachments

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Paul Sandifer
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