

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 31, 2018

Mary Neumayr
Chief of Staff
White House Council on Environmental Quality
730 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Ms. Neumayr:

Following your nomination hearing in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, we asked you several questions for the record concerning the President's national ocean policy and how you will direct the implementation of this work. While we welcomed your general commitment to work with us and other members of the Senate Oceans Caucus on ocean data and monitoring and marine debris issues, your answers to other questions failed to provide sufficient detail about your view of this administration's executive order on ocean policy and how you will implement it. Though we are eager to find opportunities to work together if you are confirmed as CEQ Chair, we are hesitant to support your nomination until we receive meaningful responses to these questions and your assurances on other concerns.

As you know, on June 19, 2018, the President's Executive Order revoked the National Ocean Policy outlined in EO 13547, consequentially eliminating the National Ocean Council, Regional Planning Bodies, and other related interagency committees. It also established a new interagency coordinating body, the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC), which is co-chaired by the Chair of the CEQ and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The OPC's overarching responsibility is to "implement the policy" and "ensure appropriate coordination by federal agencies on ocean-related matters." On June 28, 2018, you and Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant Director of OSTP Ted Wackler sent a memorandum to the federal departments and agencies that sit on the OPC establishing the OPC and two subcommittees and setting a first meeting of the OPC on August 1.

This initial meeting on August 1 is critical in establishing the goals of the OPC and setting expectations for federal cooperation with regional ocean partnerships. At this meeting and throughout your leadership at the OPC, we request assurances that you will do the following:

- set a meeting schedule that is more frequent than the meager "at least annually" requirement set forth in the implementation guidance, with at least one meeting a year to be at the principal level;
- issue additional guidance documents ensuring that ocean management decisions made by the OPC and participating executive departments and agencies are informed by "the best available ocean-related science and knowledge," as directed under the June 19 executive order, and that no restrictions will be placed on the use of peer-reviewed science related to climate change and ocean acidification;
- establish a subcommittee or other working group under the OPC to lead directed outreach to the ROPs to identify regional priorities, such as data collection, storage,

and communication needs, and to delegate action items to OPC members to support these needs;

- direct all participating executive departments and agencies to make publicly available all action plans, targets, strategies, reports, and other materials developed by the OPC, including those that address the needs of the ROPs;
- issue guidance documents to OPC member agencies that the OPC's work considers conservation needs, including the consequences of climate change, ocean acidification, and other changing ocean conditions, alongside all discussions of sustainable use, development, and management of the oceans; and
- commit to meeting with the members of the House and Senate Oceans Caucuses at least once a year to provide updates on the OPC's work and learn about the Caucuses' legislative initiatives.

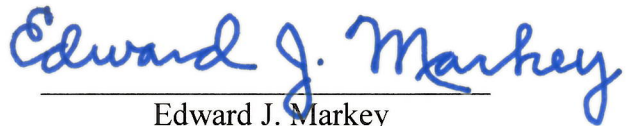
Our oceans are too valuable of a resource to take for granted or surrender to short-term gains. The CEQ Chair has an important responsibility through the OPC to ensure future generations inherit clean, healthy oceans. We hope you take this responsibility seriously.

We look forward to your reply.

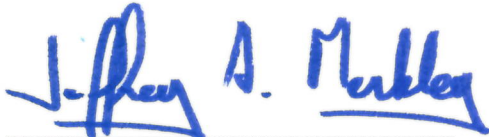
Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator