

We intend to establish ecological reserves in the most fragile areas to keep them off-limits to fishing, drilling, and other damaging uses. I'm also directing the EPA to strengthen water quality standards all along our coasts and provide stronger protections for the most vulnerable ocean waters, to reduce pollution of beaches, coasts, and oceans.

Second, I'm announcing today our commitment to permanently protect coral reefs of the northwest Hawaiian Islands. If you've ever been there, you know why we should. These eight islands are not, all of them, so well-known, but they stretch over 1,200 miles. They shelter more than 60 percent of America's coral reefs. They're home to plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth and to highly endangered species, including leatherback turtles and monk seals.

I'm directing the Departments of Interior and Commerce to develop in the next 90 days a comprehensive plan to protect the reefs, working with State and regional authorities and making sure the people of Hawaii also have a voice at the table. It is in our national interest to do this, and it should not be a partisan issue. On more than one occasion, Representative Gilcrest has supported our environmental initiatives, and I thank you, sir, for that. It should not be a Republican or a Democratic issue.

I sent a budget this year to the Congress to provide significant new resources to fight climate change and air and water pollution. My lands legacy initiative would provide record funding to protect our lands and coasts. I think the leadership in Congress is swimming against the tide, because they've proposed a budget that would cut funding for critical environmental priorities. A House committee has slashed lands legacy by 75 percent. And once again, the majority is loading up the budget bills with anti-environmental riders that would cripple the new national monuments I created earlier this year, surrender our public lands to private interests, and undermine our efforts to protect water resources and combat global warming.

Already in this year of rather hot election rhetoric—you may have noticed there's an election this year—[laughter]—there have been commitments to roll back the efforts I have taken to create 43 million roadless

acres in our national forests. We need to have a clear, national, bipartisan consensus at the grassroots level, that we don't need these riders, and we do need a national commitment to the environment.

For thousands of years, oceans and beaches have stirred the human imagination. Today, ocean depths offer hopes for medicine and science. They still stir the curious child in all of us. I said in my State of the Union Address that I thought in the next few years, we would not only decode the human genome and find cures for various kinds of cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes; we would also find out what's in the black holes in the universe. But we are also going to find out what's in the darkest depths of our oceans, and what we find out may save hundreds of thousands of people.

Forty-five years ago Rachel Carson wrote from her Maryland home that the sea "keeps alive the sense of continuing creation and of the relentless drive of life . . . in the sea nothing lives to itself . . . the present is linked with past and future, and each living thing with all that surrounds it." If we could all think that about each other and our community—that we do not live to ourselves, that we are linked to the past and the future, and that everything that happens requires a due consideration for all that surrounds it—then America would have its greatest days in the new millennium.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. on North Ocean Beach. In his remarks, he referred to Carolyn Cummins, president, Maryland Coastal Bays Program, and Marc Koenings, superintendent, Assateague National Island Seashore.

Executive Order 13158—Marine Protected Areas

May 26, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and in furtherance of the purposes of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–ee), National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 *et seq.*),

National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*), Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1362 *et seq.*), Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (42 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*), and other pertinent statutes, it is ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. This Executive Order will help protect the significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations by strengthening and expanding the Nation's system of marine protected areas (MPAs). An expanded and strengthened comprehensive system of marine protected areas throughout the marine environment would enhance the conservation of our Nation's natural and cultural marine heritage and the ecologically and economically sustainable use of the marine environment for future generations. To this end, the purpose of this order is to, consistent with domestic and international law: (a) strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs; (b) develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs representing diverse U.S. marine ecosystems, and the Nation's natural and cultural resources; and (c) avoid causing harm to MPAs through federally conducted, approved, or funded activities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. For the purposes of this order: (a) "Marine protected area" means any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.

(b) "Marine environment" means those areas of coastal and ocean waters, the Great Lakes and their connecting waters, and submerged lands thereunder, over which the United States exercises jurisdiction, consistent with international law.

(c) The term "United States" includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sec. 3. MPA Establishment, Protection, and Management. Each Federal agency whose authorities provide for the establishment or management of MPAs shall take appropriate actions to enhance or expand protection of existing MPAs and establish or recommend, as appropriate, new MPAs. Agencies implementing this section shall consult with the agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, consistent with existing requirements.

Sec. 4. National System of MPAs. (a) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior, in consultation with the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and other pertinent Federal agencies shall develop a national system of MPAs. They shall coordinate and share information, tools, and strategies, and provide guidance to enable and encourage the use of the following in the exercise of each agency's respective authorities to further enhance and expand protection of existing MPAs and to establish or recommend new MPAs, as appropriate:

- (1) science-based identification and prioritization of natural and cultural resources for additional protection;
- (2) integrated assessments of ecological linkages among MPAs, including ecological reserves in which consumptive uses of resources are prohibited, to provide synergistic benefits;
- (3) a biological assessment of the minimum area where consumptive uses would be prohibited that is necessary to preserve representative habitats in different geographic areas of the marine environment;
- (4) an assessment of threats and gaps in levels of protection currently afforded

to natural and cultural resources, as appropriate;

(5) practical, science-based criteria and protocols for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of MPAs;

(6) identification of emerging threats and user conflicts affecting MPAs and appropriate, practical, and equitable management solutions, including effective enforcement strategies, to eliminate or reduce such threats and conflicts;

(7) assessment of the economic effects of the preferred management solutions; and

(8) identification of opportunities to improve linkages with, and technical assistance to, international marine protected area programs.

(b) In carrying out the requirements of section 4 of this order, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall consult with those States that contain portions of the marine environment, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, tribes, Regional Fishery Management Councils, and other entities, as appropriate, to promote coordination of Federal, State, territorial, and tribal actions to establish and manage MPAs.

(c) In carrying out the requirements of this section, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall seek the expert advice and recommendations of non-Federal scientists, resource managers, and other interested persons and organizations through a Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee. The Committee shall be established by the Department of Commerce.

(d) The Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior shall establish and jointly manage a website for information on MPAs and Federal agency reports required by this order. They shall also publish and maintain a list of MPAs that meet the definition of MPA for the purposes of this order.

(e) The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall establish a Marine Protected Area Center to carry out, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, the requirements of subsection 4(a) of this order, coordinate the website established pursuant to subsection 4(d) of this order, and partner with governmental and nongovernmental entities to conduct necessary research, analysis, and exploration. The goal of the MPA Center shall be, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, to develop a framework for a national system of MPAs, and to provide Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments with the information, technologies, and strategies to support the system. This national system framework and the work of the MPA Center is intended to support, not interfere with, agencies' independent exercise of their own existing authorities.

(f) To better protect beaches, coasts, and the marine environment from pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), relying upon existing Clean Water Act authorities, shall expeditiously propose new science-based regulations, as necessary, to ensure appropriate levels of protection for the marine environment. Such regulations may include the identification of areas that warrant additional pollution protections and the enhancement of marine water quality standards. The EPA shall consult with the Federal agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, States, territories, tribes, and the public in the development of such new regulations.

Sec. 5. Agency Responsibilities. Each Federal agency whose actions affect the natural or cultural resources that are protected by an MPA shall identify such actions. To the extent permitted by law and to the maximum extent practicable, each Federal agency, in taking such actions, shall avoid harm to the natural and cultural resources that are protected by an MPA. In implementing this section, each Federal agency shall refer to the MPAs identified under subsection 4(d) of this order.

Sec. 6. Accountability. Each Federal agency that is required to take actions under this order shall prepare and make public annually a concise description of actions taken

by it in the previous year to implement the order, including a description of written comments by any person or organization stating that the agency has not complied with this order and a response to such comments by the agency.

Sec. 7. International Law. Federal agencies taking actions pursuant to this Executive Order must act in accordance with international law and with Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988, on the Territorial Sea of the United States of America, Presidential Proclamation 5030 of March 10, 1983, on the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States of America, and Presidential Proclamation 7219 of September 2, 1999, on the Contiguous Zone of the United States.

Sec. 8. General. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed as altering existing authorities regarding the establishment of Federal MPAs in areas of the marine environment subject to the jurisdiction and control of States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Indian tribes.

(b) This order does not diminish, affect, or abrogate Indian treaty rights or United States trust responsibilities to Indian tribes.

(c) This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 26, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
12:14 p.m. May 30, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 31.

**Memorandum on Protection of U.S.
Coral Reefs in the Northwest
Hawaiian Islands**

May 26, 2000

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Interior,
the Secretary of Commerce*

Subject: Protection of U.S. Coral Reefs in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands

The world's coral reefs—our tropical rain forests of the water—are in serious decline. These important and sensitive areas of biodiversity warrant special protection. While the United States has only 3 percent of the world's coral reefs, nearly 70 percent of U.S. coral reefs are in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Many of the Northwest Hawaiian Island's coral, fish, and invertebrate species are unique, and the area is home to endangered Hawaiian monk seals and threatened turtles. In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt set aside certain islands and reefs in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands for the protection of sea birds. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages this area as the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

In June 1998, I signed an Executive Order for Coral Reef Protection (E.O. 13089), which established the Coral Reef Task Force and directed all Federal agencies with coral reef-related responsibilities to develop a strategy for coral reef protection. States and territories with coral reefs were invited to be full partners with the Federal Government in preparing an action plan to better protect and preserve the Nation's coral reef ecosystems. In March of this year, the Task Force issued the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*. The Plan lays out a science-based road map to healthy coral reefs for future generations, based on two fundamental strategies: promoting understanding of coral reef ecosystems by, for example, conducting comprehensive mapping, assessment, and monitoring of coral reefs; and reducing the adverse impacts of human activities by, for example, creating an expanded and strengthened network of Federal, State,