

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2011

Dr. Jane Lubchenco  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Jane Lubchenco:

Thank you for your recent appearance before the Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard. I appreciated our candid discussion of NOAA's portion of the FY2012 Presidential Budget request, and look forward to many similar productive meetings in the future.

We have finally wrapped up the negotiations surrounding the FY2011 budget as well, and I am sure you are looking forward to getting to all the important work that NOAA does with some measure of fiscal certainty for the remainder of the year. As you react to the continuing resolution and formulate your spend plans, I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to my previously stated position on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and the concerns it raises for Alaskans.

First and foremost, Alaskans are concerned marine spatial planning processes will serve as a hindrance to future economic development. As you know, the state has said it will not participate in the grant solicitation to fund regional ocean governance bodies. When talking to constituents, they are concerned that the 'ocean zoning' efforts which marine spatial planning represents will result in federal regulatory bodies superseding existing state laws and planning efforts. Since Alaska is the only state in our National Ocean Council region, there is no need to coordinate between states, and such efforts would only represent another layer of federal bureaucracy in an already over-regulated state.

With all that in mind, I ask that you not expend any taxpayer funds for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning in Alaska this year. Instead, I urge you to use the savings from keeping Alaska out of this program to increase your investment in fisheries stock assessments in Alaska waters.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator