

Testimony of Curt Smitch
Office of the Governor, State of Washington

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
Seattle, Washington
June 13, 2002

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of Governor Locke who could not be here today, I would like to welcome the Commission to the State of Washington. We have been following what you have been doing across the country and the governor wanted us to be here to let you know of the interest and the seriousness with which we take the business that you are about.

As you know, our region has been struggling mightily. And Mr. Ruckelshaus has convinced you by now, if I know Bill, of the difficulty of addressing our salmon issues, which are a fish that spend most of their life cycle in the oceans. We are struggling now with the fresh water phase of their life cycle which gets us into our watersheds, and as was said yesterday at Nisqually, brings a lot of people to the table to try to resolve those issues. I would say the area we know the least about but clearly has one of the major impacts on resources, salmon resources as well as our coastal resources, is the ocean. And we're very concerned about how that fits into the work that we have begun through our land based and watershed related issues. So we are following closely what you are doing.

We encourage you to make a strong set of recommendations to the president on this and we hope that he treats the Commission with the seriousness we think the business that you are about warrants. With that again, I would like to welcome you. I appreciate very much on behalf of the governor you taking the time to come here. And with, that Mr. Schultz would like to offer some comments.