

COMMENTS to the US OCEANS POLICY COMMISSION

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak before you on matters which I believe concern us all. My name is Norman Estabrook and I am employed by Science Applications International Corporation, a large employee-owned company whose primary aim is the commercial application of technologies in support of government and industry.

I come before you, today, wearing three separate hats and expressing views that are solely my own. First, and foremost, I appear as a concerned citizen, who worries over the future health of our oceans and the need for enlightened policies that will help to ensure a sound legacy for our children and grandchildren

Second, as immediate past president of the Marine Technology Society, an organization dedicated to the advancement of oceans-related technology and public education, I am hopeful that both these two elements may hold a substantial promise for avoiding what could be an otherwise gloomy future.

Finally, as a businessman with current interests in Southeastern Alaska, I am committed to promoting the welfare of native Alaskans, not as an act of generosity, but as a sound business investment. To that end, my company is involved with enterprises that not only provide profitable employment for residents, but also encourage responsible stewardship of this pristine country.

With the preceding as backdrop, I have selected from numerous options three areas with impact on the northern Pacific region that I believe warrant consideration in any final oceans policy determinations. First, is vigorous support for current efforts to establish an international, integrated ocean observing system. Such a system can substantially reduce the costs of obtaining, over time, large amounts of seismic, oceanographic and meteorological data. When coupled with evolving modeling techniques and powerful computational engines, meaningful space and time-based pictures can be produced that can lead to a vast improvement in our understanding of ocean and weather processes. With understanding comes practical benefit for commercial and public interests. Second, I would cite the need for accelerating efforts to conduct detailed seafloor mapping, including habitat survey, certainly here in the Alaskan region. Tools now exist for this that are vastly superior to any previously used and the products from such mapping could provide substantial benefits to a broad segment of government and industry. Finally, I would propose increased support for mariculture, particularly in the development of technologies that can augment traditional practices of fisheries harvesting. While we struggle to determine the extent of fish stock depletion and devise remedial practices in the face of increasing demand for product, we could be developing novel methods for farming many of these resources in an environmentally responsible manner, to the benefit of the marketplace.

In closing, I would mention that I am old enough to have been well into a long career in deep submergence research and development for the US Navy when the Stratton

Commission issued its famous report in the 1960s. It is my sincere hope that the important work with which you are charged will result in a product every bit as profound and far reaching as that delivered over 30 years ago. To that end, I wish you Godspeed. Thank you.