

# State of New York

**George E. Pataki**  
Governor

October 20, 2003

Dear Admiral Watkins:

I look forward to reviewing the report by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, due to be released later this fall. I am hopeful the Commission will offer a forward-looking plan of action which will build on the successes of the states and others who have worked to improve our coasts and oceans.

Long Island Sound and Long Island's South Shore, New York Harbor, the Hudson River, the St. Lawrence River, and the Great Lakes are among New York's diverse ocean and coastal resources, all of which are of tremendous environmental, social and economic value to the state. The economic value of water-dependent activities relating to public access and recreational use of Long Island Sound alone is estimated to be over \$2 billion annually. New York Harbor generates in excess of \$200 billion annually to the regional economy from boating, commercial and sport fishing, swimming, beachgoing, and moving cargo through the port. Long Island's South Shore boasts the largest concentration of commercial and recreational vessels, marinas and other water-dependent businesses in the state.

New York is well aware of the value of its coastal resources and has in place a number of programs to improve the environmental and economic health of those resources. New York State benefits from one of the most creative state coastal management programs, developed in response to the Coastal Zone Management Act. We administer one National Estuarine Research Reserve and five estuary programs, including three National Estuary Programs. Hundreds of millions of dollars in state Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, Environmental Protection Fund, and Clean Water State Revolving Fund monies have been spent to protect, restore and enhance our coastal areas.

We are working hard in New York State to address coastal and ocean issues, but states cannot go it alone. Federal Leadership is essential in the form of financial resources and uniform and fair policy guidance with standards set in an adaptive framework and based on good science.

The recent Pew Oceans Commission, on which I served, outlined many steps that should be taken to address ocean issues. The Commission's report, "America's Living Oceans," provides important recommendations for actions to restore and protect ocean ecosystems, rebuild fish population, protect coastal habitat, reduce pollution and improve ocean governance. This report has sparked intense public attention, including hundreds of editorials, op-eds, and articles about the topic of the health of our oceans and coastal resources.

With our oceans being part of a global challenge, we must develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. Working together, we can meet the challenges. I look forward to receiving and commenting on the Commission's report and hope that it will provide New York and our nation with a strong blueprint for action.

Very truly yours,  
/s/ George E. Pataki

Admiral James D. Watkins, USN  
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