

various fields of chemical research, has had a tremendously positive impact on the quality of our health and lives and we all owe Don and his dedicated colleagues our utmost gratitude and appreciation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note that on rollcall 397 I voted incorrectly and would like the RECORD to reflect that I had intended to vote "yea" on that rollcall vote.

INTRODUCTION OF OCEANS 21

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, today signals the beginning of a new era in the protection and management of this Nation's largest public trust resource: our oceans. Along with the other bi-partisan co-chairs of the House Oceans Caucus, JIM GREENWOOD of Pennsylvania, TOM ALLEN of Maine, and CURT WELDON of Pennsylvania, I introduced OCEANS 21, a comprehensive oceans policy bill that answers the calls of the Pew Oceans Commission and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Our bill offers a comprehensive legislative solution to all of the crises documented in both oceans reports by establishing a strong national oceans policy that protects, maintains, and restores the health of marine ecosystems. This national policy will secure, for present and future generations, the full range of benefits of healthy marine ecosystems—a responsibility that I take quite seriously in my job of representing California's central coast, home to the Nation's largest national marine sanctuary.

The importance of this policy cannot be overstated, as we all depend on our oceans and coasts, from the person who lives off the water to the person who visits the ocean once in a lifetime. The oceans provide food, jobs, vacation spots, as well as opportunities for scientific inquiry, including medical discovery, and personal reflection. Despite our inability to measure the many non-market values associated with our oceans and coasts, we are able to quantify some of the benefits they provide. For example, over a trillion dollars is added to our economy each year by ocean and coastal economies. This is a huge economic contribution to our gross domestic product, a contribution that must be protected so the returns keep coming. Our bill explicitly protects these returns.

Mr. Speaker, to implement the national oceans policy set forth in OCEANS 21, we provide four national standards which covered actions, defined as those carried out by the Federal Government or paid for in part by Federal funds, must be consistent with. These standards include a precautionary approach and a reversal of the burden of proof. These cornerstones of OCEANS 21 are founded on

the opinions of many marine scientists who have seen the health of marine ecosystems degrade over the past years. In fact, many scientists have been encouraging a restructuring of our ocean policy to reflect a precautionary approach and a reversal of the burden of proof for many years. For example, in a 1998 Science article, Paul Dayton, a preeminent marine scientist, asserted, "If society's environmental needs are to be protected so that future generations can also enjoy, learn, and profit from marine ecosystems, this legal burden of proof must be applied to our marine resources so that those hoping to exploit them must demonstrate no ecologically significant long-term changes." Today, I am proud to report back to the scientists, those who know our oceans better than most, that members of Congress have heard their calls and have responded.

As asserted in both the Pew and U.S. Commission Reports, our government needs a way to promote greater coordination among federal agencies whose actions may affect the oceans. Our bill responds to this issue by establishing a National Oceans Council comprised of secretaries of departments and heads of independent agencies. OCEANS 21 recommends that this Council be chaired by a National Oceans Advisor to the President. We recognized early on in our House Oceans Caucus leadership discussions that the best way to improve federal stewardship of our ocean resources was to offer a mechanism for bringing federal agencies together and to have an advisor to the President who can articulate the importance of the oceans. The National Oceans Council and the National Oceans Advisor are the solutions we present.

One of the biggest advances in our understanding of the oceans to occur since our last national review of ocean policy over 30 years ago is that the natural world functions as ecosystems, with each species intricately connected to the other parts that make up the whole. Both the Pew and the U.S. Commission Reports clearly state that we must adopt a new policy framework that is based on the concept of "the whole," an ecosystem-based approach, and move away from our archaic approach based on political boundaries. This new ecosystem-based management approach will not be as easy as our previous approaches, but we must dedicate ourselves to making it a reality.

We have responded to the call for ecosystem-based management by including within OCEANS 21 a provision for Regional Ocean Councils, whose primary responsibility is to do ecosystem planning. We do comprehensive land use planning, so why not do comprehensive ocean planning? With a national ocean policy explicitly written to maintain healthy ocean ecosystems and with Regional Ocean Councils charged with developing and implementing regional ocean ecosystem plans, we can turn back the tide of irresponsible ocean management.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also provides an "Organic Act" for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—an agency whose existence today is only reflected in an Executive Order. Our bill establishes NOAA in statute. However, unlike some of the other proposals currently being considered, we do not simply codify the status quo. This is because we recognize the status quo has failed and, if long-term ecological sustainability is

one of our goals, then we can no longer consider our ocean resources in a piecemeal fashion. OCEANS 21, therefore, restructures NOAA to better reflect the importance of ecosystem approaches.

Setting the stage for a long-term solution to the best possible management of our ocean resources, we also call for the President to submit recommendations for reorganizing Federal departments to establish a Department of Natural Resources. This way, all of our valuable natural resources can be managed together—reflecting our full acknowledgement of the connections between all parts of the natural world, from the oceans to the land to the air.

In addition to addressing the problems of oceans governance, OCEANS 21 also addresses the need for increased investments in marine science research, including ocean exploration, and marine education.

Mr. Speaker, to address the Pew and U.S. Commission recommendations surrounding the ocean science, our bill calls for a national strategy on ocean and coastal science and authorizes funding for marine ecosystems research. OCEANS 21 also creates a National Oceans Council Subcommittee to focus Federal investments on scientific areas especially requiring attention.

One of the most exciting aspects of OCEANS 21 is that it will help to instill a new marine stewardship ethic in all people—from first-graders learning how to read to graduate students investigating challenging scientific processes. The bill does this in many ways: by explicitly describing education as one of NOAA's missions; by creating an interagency ocean science and coastal education program; by establishing an ocean science and technology scholarship program; and by creating a mass media campaign on how we are all dependent on healthy and productive oceans.

Mr. Speaker, OCEANS 21 is a comprehensive response to two comprehensive ocean reports that both deliver the same sad message: our oceans are in peril and we must act now. It is up to each of us to not let this unprecedented, once-in-a-generation opportunity pass us by. With the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and The Pew Oceans Commission Reports both calling for immediate action to protect the oceans, this Congress has a responsibility to the American public to pass legislation that ensures future generations have the opportunity to benefit from healthy oceans. Since coming to Congress in 1993, I have worked hard to raise awareness of the importance of our oceans and today, my dedication to protecting this Country's largest public trust resource is reflected in the introduction of OCEANS 21. I have worked with the bi-partisan co-chairs of the House Oceans Caucus to introduce a bill that we all support and this bi-partisan effort should be celebrated.

The Bush Administration has a prime opportunity to take the steps necessary to instill a new ocean ethic in our government. Action by this Administration could very well save our oceans. The time for leadership is now. I am dedicated to providing it in Congress, and I hope the President will provide it in the White House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to dedicate themselves to shaping a better future for our oceans by supporting the House Oceans Caucus Leadership's ocean policy bill. Our bill will not only bring U.S. ocean policy