

**PETE HOEKSTRA**

SECOND DISTRICT

MICHIGAN

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111th Congress  
Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

March 11, 2010

COMMITTEES:

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND LABOR

The Honorable Nancy Sutley  
Chairwoman  
Council on Environmental Quality  
730 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Chairwoman Sutley:

I write to express my serious concerns regarding the direction of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force on recreational fishing, the Great Lakes and the state of Michigan. I appreciate the task force's attention to such critical issues, but I am concerned about the course outlined in the Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.

The Second Congressional District of Michigan, which I have been honored to represent, contains nearly 200 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. During my time in Congress, I have worked alongside my colleagues and with stakeholders concerning the most pressing issues to the Great Lakes, including toxic hot spots, invasive species and ensuring the lakes remain accessible for recreation.

Unfortunately, the recently released Interim Framework will create a top-down decision-making process from Washington, D.C. with additional bureaucracy. The framework as written also carries constitutional concerns regarding states' rights as states have primary jurisdiction over fish and wildlife.

The Great Lakes need improvement, and local stakeholders have been working in a collaborative fashion on restoration and protection efforts. I am concerned about the Interim Framework's suggestion that "a fundamental change in our current management system is required to achieve the long-term health of our oceans, coasts, and the Great Lakes." Unfortunately, the Interim Framework suggests that the right fundamental change is more bureaucracy, regulations and decisions from Washington, D.C. through the newly created National Ocean Council.

Interestingly, last month the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan. It pivots off the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy that was developed through countless hours and meetings with local stakeholders. It seems contradictory that the Task Force includes the Great Lakes in a framework tailored toward ocean management, especially when the EPA was working on a separate initiative for the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are a unique body of water and should be managed through a regional approach within the existing legal framework by respecting state sovereignty.

I am also concerned about the potential impacts of the framework on the recreational fishing industry. The Interim Report failed to acknowledge the importance of the recreational fishing



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industry and implied that it was a detriment to our oceans and lakes. The fishing industry is a good steward of the Great Lakes, contributes to its preservation and is key to economic growth. It deserves to be a partner in all matters to improve our nation's water.

As written, the framework could be interpreted to allow the Administration to restrict fishing in bodies of water. The economic and social ramifications of such a maneuver would be devastating to the people of Michigan. Such a decision should not be made in a top-down fashion with little public input.

The Administration should refrain from initiating such regulations without congressional approval. The jobs and livelihood of Michigan citizens should not be placed in the hands of bureaucrats and political appointees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Hoekstra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P".

Pete Hoekstra  
Member of Congress