

USA

Sustainable Use of Oceans

The US President has signed legislation to establish a high-level commission to recommend policies to promote “the protection and sustainable use of America’s oceans and coastal resources.”

The Law will take effect on 20 January 2001, and calls for the establishment of a Commission on Ocean Policy with 16 members, including representatives of state and local governments, universities, ocean-related industries, and the conservation and scientific communities. The President will appoint members, with 12 members drawn from nominees submitted by Congress.

The Commission will examine federal ocean policy and environmental and economic trends affecting oceans and coasts. It is also to submit recommendations to Congress and the President within 18 months of its appointment.

A White House spokesman stated that the Commission is to recommend ways: to promote responsible stewardship of fisheries and other marine resources; to protect the marine environment; to enhance marine-related commerce and transportation; to expand human knowledge of the marine environment; to protect life and property; to preserve America’s international leadership on ocean issues; and increase cooperation among federal, state, and local governments and with the private sector.

Under the new law, the Commission will be required to hold public hearings throughout the country, release a draft report for public review, and consult with the Governors of coastal states.

The President is to use the Commission’s report as the basis for proposals to Congress for the responsible use and stewardship of ocean and coastal resources. (MJ)

