

**NOAA Enforcement Summit
Hamilton Crowne Plaza, Washington D.C.**

August 3, 2010

**The Honorable Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere**

**CLOSING REMARKS
(As delivered)**

- I want to start by simply saying thank you to each of you for attending today's Summit. I realize you all have jobs and other obligations, and I applaud your commitment to improving our enforcement programs by taking the time to be here.
- As I noted this morning, we cannot meet our nation's economic, social, and environmental needs without a strong, trusted, enforcement program. Effective enforcement – in addition to state-of-the-art science and innovative management programs – is essential to ensuring sustainable fisheries, healthy stocks of marine mammals and endangered species, vibrant coastal communities, and stable economies.

- We can all agree that earning the confidence of our stakeholders and the public across our country in the effectiveness and fairness of our program is of great importance.
- Our goal today was to get your ideas and input about how we can further develop and improve our enforcement program around the country and internationally. Based on what I've heard about the discussions today, we've succeeded.
- Staff has informed me of a number of comments and recommendations that have been generated in response to the 3 areas addressed at this Summit. Some of these confirm we're heading in the right direction with the current initiatives we have underway, others provide fresh ideas and increased understanding of the dynamics we are all a part of.
- We will summarize all these ideas and post them on the Summit website for all to comment on. We will also begin discussions on how best to

follow up on them and implement those that we can. Holding this Summit was just one of many actions we're taking and we need to coordinate its outcomes with those other actions.

- I'd like to briefly highlight a few key points we have heard under each of the 3 areas you discussed today:

Topic #1) Improving compliance. This really means improving communications and decreasing complexity. Some of the key themes and messages for each included:

- Increased engagement between the regulated community and the Office of Law Enforcement, which might include greater presence on the docks and educational outreach.
- Increased interactions between NOAA scientists and managers and the regulated community regarding the basis for regulations.

- Greater use of 21st century communication technologies (i.e. real-time communication, access to information, reducing the need for 'hard-copy' documentation).

- Easier to understand regulations.

- 24 - hour access to regulatory information including a question hotline.

- Enforceability of regulations as an early consideration to reduce complexity and increase compliance.

Topic #2) How to improve consistency, transparency, and communication with regulated communities and other stakeholders.

The comments primarily focused on violations and emphasized the need to:

- Establish consistent protocols across regions while recognizing unique circumstances.

- Develop and publish penalty schedules and align penalties with the types and severity of the violation.

- Increase understanding of violations by categorizing them in some understandable manner – suggestions included by region, by type, by fishery management plan, or by social or biological impacts.

- Provide formal oversight – suggestions included current high-level review within NOAA leadership, establishing an ombudsman and involving the Regional Fishery Management Councils and Industry in reviews.

Topic #3) How we set priorities, with a focus on NOAA's recent draft plan for establishing and maintaining a process for setting national and regional enforcement priorities.

- Create national priorities but tailor them to regions.
- Balanced priorities across the broader suite of NOAA responsibilities, not just fisheries.
- Be smart about using Regional Fishery Management Council meetings, state and regional efforts, and Sanctuary Advisory Councils to leverage input by other relevant groups.
- Consider high, medium, and low priorities as per the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- To set priorities, need first to establish criteria for doing so.

- Based on this input, I will work with my Leadership Team to develop a plan for moving forward based on the results of this Summit and the comments that will follow. Additionally, we will continue to aggressively implement our action plan in response to the OIG's reports.
- Through these combined actions, I believe we can improve our compliance and enforcement programs, and build confidence among our stakeholders.
- I want to thank all of you that made a presentation today to set the context for the different sessions. Thanks to Susan Podziba, Summit Facilitator, and the Udall Center for Dispute Resolution for their assistance. Thank you to the facilitators who worked with each table. Finally, thank you to those on the planning team, Zubin Bamji and the rest of you, for developing the Summit and handling the logistics. All of you provided the context and support needed to make this Summit successful.

- In closing, my goal is for NOAA to become the leader in Federal natural resource protection, conservation, and management. I am committed to ensuring our compliance and enforcement programs contribute directly and substantively to that goal.
- I am well aware our success will not be measured solely on holding this Summit, or how well it went, or what valuable input we received. Rather, our success will be measured on how we use the input to improve our enforcement programs.
- We must and will build NOAA's future enforcement program together.
- Again, thank you for your attendance and contributions.