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**Testimony on HJR16
National Ocean Policy
House Resources Committee, April 8, 2013**

Good afternoon co-chairs Feige, Saddler and members of the committee. My name is Rick Rogers, Executive Director of the Resource Development Council for Alaska (RDC).

RDC has been engaged in the issue of National Ocean Policy and Marine Spatial Planning since the release of executive order in July 2010. We have participated in public comments on numerous occasions, I testified before a federal subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs last April, and I serve on the board of the National Ocean Policy Coalition, a national coalition of concerned user groups including industrial, commercial and recreational users of oceans and the Great Lakes.

RDC is engaged in this issue because any National Ocean Policy will have a disproportionate impact on Alaska's resource dependent industries and our economy as a whole. At approximately 34,000 miles, Alaska has more coastline than that of all other states in our nation combined.

The National Ocean Policy adds uncertainty and anxiety to an already cumbersome and complex regime of state and federal permitting and oversight. Increased bureaucracy could hamper the already slow processes with no added benefit to the environment. In our view the Coastal Marine Spatial Planning/Regional Planning Body structure is an unauthorized new regulatory program that suggests a federal level "top down" approach to management resources with minimal local input.

The ecosystem-based management goal requires a vast amount of scientific data to be fully implemented. The lack of sufficient information is often the basis for third party legal claims by Environmental Non-government Organizations (eNGOs) to block

development projects and their corresponding jobs. Natural resource managers need to use best available data to move forward and make the best decisions with information available. Ecosystem Based Management runs the risk of “paralysis-by-analysis.”

The National Ocean Policy’s stated goal of reaching to onshore activities adds to the uncertainty and anxiety for upland land use and resource development. In the executive order you find the words “affecting the ocean, our coasts and the great Lakes”. Federal water, air and endangered species statutes combined with the vast federal land holdings in Alaska result in undue federal control over Alaska land and resource management. An additional nexus of “affecting the ocean” will exacerbate this federal over reach.

RDC is concerned that Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning may lead to far reaching use restrictions on marine waters that will over-ride the social and economic needs of Alaskans. Broad swaths of submerged lands could be restricted in exclusionary zones for a nebulous national agenda of “ecosystem-based-management”. Even if restricted zones were more modest in size and scope, use restrictions in strategic marine corridors necessary for resource transport and shipping could be devastating to our marine-dependent industries.

One of the key justifications for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning is to resolve conflict among diverse resource interests, yet RDC members representing Mining, Tourism, Forestry, Oil and Gas, and Fisheries interests are firmly aligned. These industries are all concerned that NOP will create far more difficulties than it will resolve.

I would like to thank representative Saddler in addressing this important issue. While I respect the demands on the legislature in this busy 90-day session, passage of this resolution this session would be timely as the National Ocean Policy implementation plan is expected to be released by the National Ocean Council soon.

Thank you for hearing our perspective on this important issue. I would be glad to answer any questions from the committee.