



Office of the Deputy Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

June 16, 2010

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

The Department of Justice enjoys a close working relationship with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in enforcing the federal laws that protect our Nation's fisheries and marine resources. The Department of Justice and NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement and Office of General Counsel have investigated and prosecuted many significant criminal enforcement actions together, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to ensure that our fisheries and marine resources remain a national treasure to be passed onto our children and the generations that follow.

We read with great interest the recent report by the Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General concerning its review of the NOAA fisheries enforcement programs and operations, as well as your response to the report. We understand that further review is ongoing and that NOAA intends to conduct regular assessments of its enforcement programs to ensure that the programs are effective, fair, and transparent.

The Department of Justice shares your goals of effectiveness, fairness, and transparency in the enforcement of federal law. In that regard, I would appreciate an opportunity for a small group of United States Attorneys and other Department of Justice leaders to meet with you to discuss ways that our agencies can build on the successful work we have done together, particularly in the area of criminal enforcement. Our hope is to work with NOAA to develop a strategic approach to achieving our common enforcement mission.

We will contact your office next week to arrange a time for a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary G. Grindler".

Gary G. Grindler
Acting Deputy Attorney General

The Justice Department had requested the meeting to share with Dr. Lubchenco their interest in partnering with NOAA to ensure that NOAA's enforcement program remains strong and effective. In addition to Lois, Ben and me, DOC Deputy General Counsel Geovette Washington, NOAA Chief of Staff Margaret Spring, NMFS AA Eric Schwaab and Acting OLE Director Alan Risenhoover participated in the meeting as well.

The U.S. Attorneys expressed support for a strong enforcement program that includes criminal enforcement and praised NOAA for its work with the U.S. Attorney's offices on enforcement matters. They encouraged, and we agreed, to continue building on those past successes and to have the US Attorney's offices and the NOAA enforcement attorneys working more closely together going forward.

The overall tenor of the meeting was extremely positive, and I think we left feeling heartened by the support the Justice Department was offering and its praise for the enforcement work we do as well as their interest in expanding their work with us.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Lubchenco asked Lois, together with Geovette Washington and Margaret Spring, to continue the dialogue and to identify ways we can partner together for the overall benefit of both agencies, and the resources we protect.

I'd ask Ben to share his views with you as well, and to discuss ways we can partner with Justice with each of you, at your next bi-weekly or otherwise. Please also feel free to call or email Lois and me if you want to share your thoughts on this topic directly. We'll continue to keep you posted as these discussions move forward.

Mary Beth

cc: Lois, Ben