

Oceans in the News

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The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Subcommittee on National Ocean Policy Study held a hearing this week to review progress regarding recommendations included in the 2004 report, An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century. While panel leaders recognized significant strides made in recent years – resources for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has increased sixty percent in the past five or six years according to the subcommittee chairman John Sununu (R-NH) – shortfalls and lack of an overall ocean strategy continue to jeopardize the future health of oceans. For more information on the hearing visit http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1788

The Natural Resources Defense Council this week released a report detailing increasing numbers of beach closures due to high bacteria and other pollution hazards. According to their own measurements, the group says beach closings and advisories in 2005 were the highest in the 16 years of tracking. For more information on the report, visit <http://www.nrdc.org/>

Also, the Los Angeles Times has produced a five part series titled Altered Oceans, detailing crises faced by the world's oceans, including changing chemistry, algal and bacterial outbreaks, and other hazards threatening sea life as well as people on the shore. Visit <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/oceans/la-oceans-series.0,7842752.special> to view the series online. This weekly report is written by the ASCE Government Relations staff. If you have any questions or comments about any items in this report please contact govwash@asce.org.