

Compelling Vision Statement for Ocean Exploration
Ocean Exploration Advisory Board Recommendations
In response to a request from the Deputy NOAA Administrator
13 August 2019

At a recent meeting of the NOAA Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) on 31 July 2019, the Deputy NOAA Administrator requested advice and recommendations from the OEAB on a compelling vision for ocean exploration. This paper responds to this request.

OEAB Recommendations for a Compelling Vision Statement for Ocean Exploration

- Following discussion at our meeting, OEAB members developed seventeen vision statements. Subsequent voting was spread among 13 of the 17 statements, indicating a wide variety of opinions about which statement resonated for different people. We have included for your consideration the full set of suggestions from OEAB members.
- The top choice was #4, with #13, 16, & 17 also receiving a large number of votes:
 - ***4. We choose to explore our oceans, to their ultimate extremes, for the health and prosperity of our nation and the security of all humankind depends upon them.***
 - *13. A more secure and prosperous America relies on the knowledge that ocean exploration provides – Know Your Ocean.*
 - *16. We must explore our oceans to their limits - for the future prosperity of our nation and the security of all humankind.*
 - *17. We must be a nation of ocean explorers. It is our duty to understand and protect the oceans, for they are necessary to sustain humanity today and tomorrow.*
- The statements collected are suggestions from OEAB members only. We recognize since OEAB members are not broadly representative of the public, the OEAB recommends you solicit vision statements from a broader spectrum and also conduct focus groups to identify which statements resonate with different types of people.

Suggested Statements from OEAB Members

1. To secure America's security and prosperity this nation must explore the oceans, for they sustain life itself, regulate weather and climate, enable shipping and defense, and provide food, energy, medicine and other essential services.
2. We will explore the oceans because they sustain life, regulate the climate and the air we breathe, enable shipping and defense, and provide us with food, energy, and medicine.
3. An adaptation of JFK's moonshot speech:
 - We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people. For

space ocean science, like nuclear space science and all technology, has no conscience of its own. Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man, and only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theater of war. I do not say that we should or will go unprotected against the hostile misuse of space the ocean any more than we go unprotected against the hostile use of land or sea space, but I do say that space our ocean can be explored and mastered without feeding the fires of war, without repeating the mistakes that man has made in extending his writ around this globe of ours.

- There is no strife, no prejudice, no national conflict in outer space the deep sea as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again. But why, some say, the Moon Ocean? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask, why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 50 years ago, fly the Atlantic go to the moon? Why does Rice play Texas?
 - **We choose to go to the Moon explore the Ocean!** We choose to go to the Moon explore the Ocean...We choose to go to the Moon explore the Ocean in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win, and the others, too.
4. We choose to explore our oceans, to their ultimate extremes, for the health and prosperity of our nation and the security of all humankind depends upon them.
 5. We are compelled to explore the oceans because they sustain life, regulate the climate and the air we breathe, enable shipping and defense, and provide us with food, energy, and medicine.
 6. Over two centuries ago, Lewis and Clark courageously embarked on an expedition to explore the unknown and chart the uncharted for commerce, for science, for American leadership. Today, we need explorers with the courage to explore and chart the unknown deeps of our oceans for our nation, for the world, for humanity.
 7. By the end of this decade we will completely explore the remaining unknown areas of America: our Oceans.
 8. This nation must unlock the secrets of the oceans, for they sustain life, regulate weather and climate, enable shipping and defense, and provide us with food, energy, medicine, and other essential services.
 9. America is an Ocean Exploration Nation, continuously seeking to discover the infinite secrets of the Earth's oceans, which sustain life, regulate the climate and the air we breathe, enable shipping and defense, and provide us with food, energy, and medicine.
 10. Ocean exploration leadership – America's compelling opportunity for security of our nation, our economy, our environment for the next era.

11. History provides many great seafaring explorers – Magellan, Cook, Amundsen to name a few. They explored to chart new territory for their nations and future generations. Today America stands challenged to explore our oceans, which are vital to our nation, to the world, to future generations of humanity. We must seize the challenge today to explore our uncharted oceans for tomorrow.
12. Yesterday, explorers dared brave journeys into unknown lands, seas, and space to master human ignorance and provide for our generation. Today, we face massive unexplored areas of our oceans. Tomorrow, our future generations of the 21st century and beyond look to us to explore the oceans to gain knowledge necessary to preserve and sustain our nation, our climate, our life.
13. A more secure and prosperous America relies on the knowledge that ocean exploration provides – *Know Your Ocean*.
14. The oceans sustain life, regulate weather and climate, enable shipping and defense, and provide food, energy, medicine and other essential services. To secure America’s security and prosperity, we must be a nation of ocean explorers.
15. The ocean has a unique capacity to inhale/exhale, and by doing so, it provides food to the world, regulates our climate and weather, removes toxins from the atmosphere, and inspires us with unique creatures that come from another world. It is also the last frontier on the planet yet to be explored. It is not an option whether America should lead that effort, it is a responsibility, one that is necessary for future generations.
16. We must explore our oceans to their limits - for the future prosperity of our nation and the security of all humankind.
17. We must be a nation of ocean explorers. It is our duty to understand and protect the oceans, for they are necessary to sustain humanity today and tomorrow.

Observations

- David McKinnie and I also sent the list of statements to a few family members and friends. It was interesting to note that while # 13, 16 and 17 were favorites of the OEAB, they received few votes from the broader group of non-scientists/engineers. #4 was a clear favorite of this group of people.
- Since the goal of the vision statement is to engage a much broader segment of the populace in ocean exploration, the OEAB strongly recommends conducting focus group studies to identify the most promising statements. As we all know, word choice is critical in statements such as this, and changing a few words or concepts can make a large difference in how it is embraced by different segments of the population.