

Fisheries Expert David Benton Appointed to US Arctic Research Commission

Washington, DC, June 18, 2012 - President Obama has appointed David Benton, a marine conservationist who has worked in both the private and public sectors, to the US Arctic Research Commission. Benton replaces former Commissioner Michele Longo Eder, an attorney from Newport, OR.

The President also re-appointed Commissioners Dr. Charles Vörösmarty, Director, City College of New York Environmental Cross-Roads Initiative, and Dr. Warren Zapol, M.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University, to another 4-year term on the Commission. Additional biographical information can be found at www.arctic.gov.

Benton has been involved with fisheries, marine conservation, and ocean governance issues since the mid 1970's, when he moved from California to Alaska. He has long recognized that true stewardship means blending conservation with respect for the way of life in Alaska's remote communities. As the state's international fisheries negotiator at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Benton helped negotiate many fisheries treaties now in force in the North Pacific. In addition, he served on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for nine years. Most recently he held the position of Executive Director of the Marine Conservation Alliance.

"The Arctic is an increasingly important strategic region for the United States," said Benton. "The world is looking to the Arctic for new sources of energy, improved transportation, and access to the region's natural resources. Potential new mineral development and fisheries in the Arctic could have profound effects on the region. The United States must field a robust and integrated science program in the Arctic to guide these developments and I look forward to working with the Commission to help meet this challenge."

Fran Ulmer, the chair of the Commission, praised the appointment. "We are very pleased that President Obama has appointed David Benton. I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Benton on fisheries issues over the years, and I know that he is very knowledgeable and dedicated to bringing science to policy makers in timely and relevant ways."

The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 established the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, an independent federal agency that advises the president and congress. Its principal duties are to develop and recommend an integrated national Arctic research policy and assist in establishing a national Arctic research program plan to implement the policy. Commissioners also facilitate cooperation between the federal government, state and local governments, and other nations with respect to Arctic research, both basic and applied.

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Media Contact: Kathy Farrow, 703-525-0112, kfarrow@arctic.gov