

ELI REPORT

Seminars highlight problems, possible solutions to ocean problems

To help kick off the Ocean Program, ELI hosted the first Associates Seminar in a series on ocean issues. The event, *Ocean Law and Policy: An Update*, featured experts **Walter Cruickshank**, the Deputy Director of the Mineral Management Service at the Interior Department; **Karen Hansen**, an environmental lawyer at Beveridge & Diamond PC; **Diane Regas**, the Director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds; and **Roger Rufe**, the President and CEO of The Ocean Conservancy.

ELI's Kathryn Mengerink (see opposite page) began the event with a short overview of reports from both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, outlining the state of ocean law and policy. Acting as moderator, Mengerink challenged the panelists to identify the three most critical issues facing the marine environment. They identified climate change, over-fishing, land-based activities which negatively impact oceans, and lack of public attention as significant ocean problems.

After discussing the most pressing issues, the panelists said that existing governance structures are not adequate to address the environmental and regulatory needs of the marine environment. Panelists noted that the ocean governance structure is a piecemeal system where many different federal and state agencies hold responsibility for issues that affect oceans. While the panelists agreed that nearly all sectors would like a unified system of ocean governance, they also agreed that such a dramatic change will be difficult to achieve.

The panelists each gave a short overview of their work. Cruickshank informed the audience about the Mineral Management Service's work on energy development on the outer continental shelf. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 gave the Department of the Interior new authority over renewable energy and alternative uses in the OCS, he said. In December 2005, MMS published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking to

gather opinions on how to approach the topic. The comment period closed recently, and MMS hopes to release a proposed rule by the end of the year. Cruickshank also highlighted MMS's work on creating a comprehensive map of the ocean that includes current infrastructure, boundaries, and uses.

Diane Regas gave a portrait of interagency coordination on ocean governance. In December 2004, the Bush administration released its Oceans Action Plan, which created the Committee on Ocean Policy, a cabinet-level group including the head of each agency involved in oceans work. The COP established the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (known by many as the "Aqua Box") with

menting the recommendations in the two recent ocean commission reports. While most implementation efforts received low grades, Rufe pointed out that regional-level initiatives earned decent marks (B-). A bipartisan group of senators recently approached the JOCI seeking specific recommendations for congressional action, he said. JOCI is also providing feedback to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce as it reauthorizes the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The panel ended by noting that although nearly all sectors can agree on the major ocean problems, disagreements will arise about how to solve them. The panelists called for strong leadership



SEA HANDS: Roger Rufe of the Ocean Conservancy, Karen Hansen of Beveridge and Diamond, Diane Regas of EPA, Kathryn Mengerink of ELI, and Walter Cruickshank of the Interior Department share their ocean expertise at an ELI seminar.

two subcommittees, the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources and the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology. Regas is a co-chair of SIMOR, which is advancing regional collaboration, promoting increased interaction between scientists and managers, and establishing a water quality monitoring network.

Roger Rufe, a former Pew Oceans Commissioner, spoke about his work as a member of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, which recently released a report card on progress toward imple-

to coordinate solutions to the critically important problems.

The second seminar in the series, *Shipping, Trade, and the Environment*, will be held in July. More than two billion tons of cargo move through U.S. ports annually, and trade is expected to double in the next 15 years. Accommodating this growth will require increased shipping, larger ships, deeper ports, and greater port infrastructure. The seminar will explore the impacts of increased ocean traffic, whale strikes, air emissions, noise, ship breaking, invasive species, and other issues.