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"Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites."¹

Environmental protection has been a key mission of the U.S. Coast Guard for many years, as we are diligent to eliminate environmental damage and the degradation of natural resources associated with maritime transportation, fishing, and recreational boating. Environmental protection has become increasingly important globally as the Earth's population has discovered the short- and long-term effects of our collective and individual environmental footprints. It has become more imperative than voluntary that we rise to meet the challenges of preserving and protecting our planet. Every organization must find ways to contribute to this effort if we expect to keep pace with our global demands for clean air, clean water, and other natural resources while balancing the need for prosperity in a globalized economy.

The U. S. Coast Guard is devoted to positively leveraging our governmental influence to protect U.S. waters, coasts, and natural resources for current and future generations. As part of the Standards Directorate, the Office of Operating and Environmental Standards has a diverse collection of responsibilities for developing and maintaining standards in the areas of maritime personnel, vessels and facilities, hazardous materials, and environmental protection through treaties, regulations, and policy. Staff members represent the U.S. at meetings of numerous national and international standards organizations, ensuring that U.S. initiatives and views are strongly supported in these arenas. The industry perspective is incorporated in standards development using input and advice from federal advisory committees. By using that input in the regulatory process, the needs of stakeholders are considered, while marine safety is enhanced and the marine environment is preserved and protected.

This issue of *Proceedings* will serve to update readers on recent innovations in policy, regulations, and technological advances in the air, on land, on the surface, and beneath the waves. My sincere thanks go to our Coast Guard and industry authors, who have taken the time to share their ideas and best practices. We hope that you will find this issue to be a valuable resource toward planning, evaluating, and maximizing the effectiveness of your own environmental goals.

Semper Paratus!

¹ William Ruckelshaus, first EPA administrator (1970-1973 and 1983-1985), *Business Week*, June 18, 1990.