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## **NATIONAL AQUARIUM SOCIETY IN WASHINGTON, DC FORMS ALLIANCE WITH NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE**

### **Commerce Secretary Donald Evans Hosts Official Signing**

#### **Partnership to Provide Expanded Educational Programming, Future New Exhibits and the Highest Standards of Animal Care**

Washington, D.C., September 4, 2003—The governance boards of The National Aquarium Society and the National Aquarium in Baltimore have formed an alliance to provide greater opportunities for The National Aquarium to serve the children of and visitors to the nation's capital.

Under an agreement signed today at the Department of Commerce and hosted by Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, the National Aquarium in Baltimore will operate the National Aquarium in D.C., providing new resources in educational programming, animal care and exhibit design and development.

“President Bush and I are very pleased that The National Aquarium in Washington has formed an alliance with the National Aquarium in Baltimore so that the Washington facility will eventually become a first-rate international attraction,” said Secretary Evans. “Working together, we can pass on the importance of preserving and safeguarding aquatic life while generating interest in marine-related sciences for generations to come.”

“For decades, The National Aquarium has opened a window onto the aquatic world,” said Nina Selin, chairman of the board of The National Aquarium Society, which currently operates The National Aquarium. “Our Board’s highest priority has been a commitment to providing free educational opportunities for groups of Washington, D.C., school children, and this alliance provides for that.

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“By partnering with one of the nation’s leading aquariums, we are ensuring that future generations in the nation’s capital will have access to world-class programs and exhibits that promote stewardship of aquatic life.”

The National Aquarium is the longest continuously operating aquarium in the U.S., serving visitors since 1931 from the lower level of the Department of Commerce building. Like the National Aquarium in Baltimore, it is not funded by the government and relies on private and public support and admission revenue to operate.

Randall M. Griffin, chairman of the Board of Governors for the National Aquarium in Baltimore, said, “The National Aquarium in Baltimore has provided informal consulting and support to The National Aquarium in Washington, D.C. for many years, including sharing aquarium-bred animals, as well as advising on animal husbandry, veterinary care and general operations. In addition, the National Aquarium in Baltimore’s educational programs have served the children of Washington, D.C., for more than 20 years.

“With this expanded partnership, we can introduce more people to the wonders of the aquatic world and encourage them to respect and protect our planet’s most essential resource.”

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, a private, non-profit organization, is Baltimore’s leading attraction and aquatic institute, hosting more than 1.6 million visitors per year. Through multiple programs both at home and abroad, it is dedicated to education and conservation, helping connect people with aquatic life to create a better world for both.

During the months ahead, board members and staff will assess mutual strengths, needs, and opportunities in order to develop a long-range plan that places education and the preservation of aquatic life in the forefront of activity.