

The Honorable Madeleine Bordallo, Chairwoman
The Honorable Henry E. Brown, Jr., Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

April 21, 2008

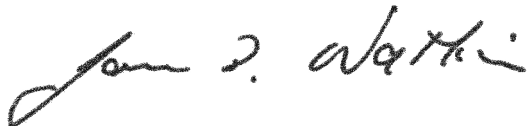
Dear Chairwoman Bordallo and Representative Brown:

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative identifies national ocean governance reform as one of the most important actions needed to improve the long-term ecological and economic health of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. We applaud and support the hard work by the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans and Congressman Farr to advance this important issue through H.R. 21, the Oceans Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act.

We are greatly encouraged that H.R. 21 incorporates language responsive to many of the Joint Initiative recommendations for developing a strong national ocean governance regime. These include establishing a statement of national ocean policy, reforming and codifying the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, codifying and strengthening a coordinating structure for ocean policy in the White House, developing a coordinated and comprehensive offshore management regime, creating a framework for regional ocean governance, and establishing an ocean trust fund. We strongly believe that a national ocean policy that reflects these elements will transform our current management structure into an effective system for managing our oceans and coasts into the future.

The Joint Initiative is grateful for the attention, resources, and commitment of the Subcommittee to the issue of ocean governance. We will continue to work with members of Congress, as well as the ocean community, to pursue governance reforms that will guide the development of a comprehensive national ocean policy. This is an ambitious objective that will require additional effort and support, but the benefits to be gained are significant and essential to revitalizing the economic and ecological health of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. The Joint Initiative stands ready to work with you, Congressman Farr, Subcommittee members, and other members of Congress to advance H.R. 21 through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy



Leon E. Panetta
Chairman, Pew Oceans Commission