

**The Joint Ocean
Commission Initiative
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The Honorable Leon E.
Panetta

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-717
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 28, 2011

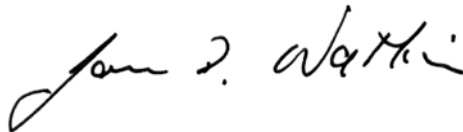
Dear Senator Whitehouse,

On behalf of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, I am writing to thank you for your commitment to both improving federal governance of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes and for your leadership in introducing legislation, along with Senator Snowe, to establish a National Endowment for them. Allocating adequate and sustained funding has been a missing but essential link to any policy to achieve healthy oceans and coasts, and to help effectively implement our proclaimed National Ocean Policy.

As you so lucidly point out, our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes play a crucial role in maintaining a strong national economy and high quality of life for all American citizens. Yet their declining health threatens the valuable life supporting services they provide. In order to manage marine and coastal resources more effectively, investment in marine science and technology is urgently needed to understand and care for the complex ocean and coastal ecosystems upon which so many people's health and livelihood depend. The National Endowment for the Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes provides an important opportunity for the Nation to establish this much-needed source of funding to support ocean and coastal science, management, and restoration.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative appreciates your leadership on this critical funding need. Please let us know how we can be of assistance as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Co-Chair Emeritus, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

CC: The Honorable Leon E. Panetta, Secretary of the Department of Defense
(formerly Co-Chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative with Admiral James D. Watkins)
The Honorable William Ruckelshaus, Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
The Honorable Norman Mineta, Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative