

May 17, 2007

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We commend you for your strong statement of support for United States accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and your continuing commitment to the nation's leadership in international ocean governance. Accession to the Convention will protect U.S. security and sovereignty, promote international commerce, and further the conservation of ocean resources, while also enhancing progress toward a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy.

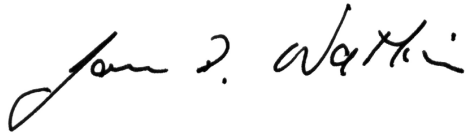
As co-chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a collaborative and bipartisan effort to advance the pace of meaningful ocean policy reform, we are deeply gratified by your robust reaffirmation of the Convention as being vital to our national interests. As you will recall, both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, to which you appointed all 16 members, and the privately funded Pew Oceans Commission, unanimously recommended accession to the Convention. In fact, the U.S. Commission's first official act was the adoption of a policy resolution urging accession after its initial organizational meeting in the fall of 2001.

Accession to the Convention will advance U.S. interests by preserving the right to use the seas to meet national security requirements and protect navigational freedom for commercial vessels to operate around the world. It also secures our rights to natural resources through the full extent of the continental shelf, even beyond 200 nautical miles. Additionally, the Convention promotes the environmental health of the oceans by supporting scientific research critical to understanding and managing the oceans. This is why the Convention enjoys diverse and strong support from virtually every sector, including national defense interests, ocean-dependent industries, and the environmental and scientific communities.

The time is long overdue for the U.S. to regain a leadership role in the governance of our world's oceans. The Joint Initiative remains committed to working with your Administration to secure the Senate's advice and consent to U.S. accession before the first session of the 110<sup>th</sup>

Congress adjourns. We urge your continued and vigorous personal support in this and related efforts to advance U.S. interests in the world's oceans.

Sincerely,



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



The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission

cc: Secretary Michael Chertoff, Department of Homeland Security  
Secretary Robert M. Gates, Department of Defense  
Secretary Carlos M. Guterrez, Department of Commerce  
Secretary Condoleeza Rice, Department of State  
National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, Executive Office of the President  
Chairman James L. Connaughton, Council on Environmental Quality  
General Peter Pace, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Senator Harry Reid, Majority Leader, United States Senate  
Senator Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, United States Senate  
Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Senator Richard J. Lugar, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations