

May 7, 2007

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131  
Washington, DC 20010

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131  
Washington, DC 20010

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Senator Shelby:

As co-chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, representing the members of the congressionally-mandated U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the independent Pew Oceans Commission, we appreciate your long-standing commitment to our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. We are writing to ask that you again take a leadership role, by making an investment in ocean programs in the Senate's FY2008 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The ocean-related science, management, and education programs funded through the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill are on the front line in the effort to understand, conserve, and maintain one of the nation's most valuable national resources. These programs are also of growing importance given the fundamental role oceans play in climate change and the impact this change will have on coastal communities and ecosystems. Increased support for these programs is essential to improve our understanding of and capacity to adapt to our changing environment, particularly along our coasts.

As the appropriations process proceeds, please consider the funding recommendations contained in the report you requested from the Joint Initiative, *From Sea to Shining Sea, Priorities for Ocean Policy Reform*, as a guide for directing resources to core ocean programs across the federal government under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction. Your continued leadership and financial support in FY2008 is of increasing importance given the stagnation in funding for most federal ocean-related programs in recent years. We request that the Subcommittee provide support at or near the levels recommended below for the agencies noted below:

- A total of \$4.5 billion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA is the nation's lead federal ocean agency where ocean-related research and data are translated into products and services that support our economy and protect marine ecosystems. Successful implementation of a new national ocean policy will require a strong NOAA, both organizationally as well as financially. However, across the board cuts and cost of living

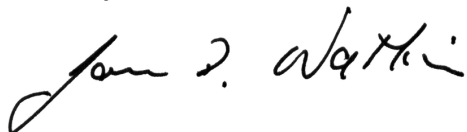
increases have significantly eroded NOAA's discretionary funding authority as its budget has stagnated. Because it is clearly the federal agency best positioned to help advance our understanding of the dynamic relationship between the oceans and atmosphere, increased resources and funding flexibility would greatly enhance NOAA's ability to fulfill its expanding mission.

- A total of \$6.4 billion, the Administration's request, for National Science Foundation (NSF) programs, which includes support for ocean research, infrastructure, and education. NSF is the largest supporter of ocean research and education and funds multidisciplinary science that is essential for understanding the global environment and helping train the next generation of leaders in ocean science. We are particularly concerned that success rate for ocean research proposals has dropped precipitously in recent years, with only 20-30 percent being funded, less if ship time is required to conduct that research.
- Significantly increased support for the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) earth sciences program. NASA provides crucial support for earth-focused remote sensing, generating information that is of increasing importance as we attempt to understand the changes occurring in our planet's climate and ecosystems. The significant loss of funding for earth science in recent years, including drastically diminished support for remote sensing programs, is jeopardizing the capacity of scientists to provide policy makers and the public with information needed to make balanced, informed, and timely decisions to guide strategies to adapt to a changing environment.

These appropriations would represent a significant downpayment on and be responsive to the \$750 million increase in annual funding the Joint Initiative identified as critical to begin addressing the decline in our oceans and set the stage for recovery. With additional funding, we can move towards the sustainable management of a resource that generates \$138 billion in ocean-specific economic activity for the United States every year.

We greatly appreciate the generous support you have provided over the past few and stand ready to work with you and your staff as you craft funding legislation for federal ocean programs in FY 2008. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations and please contact us directly or Laura Cantral at 202-354-6444 if we can be of further service.

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