

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker:

As the co-chairs of the bipartisan Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, which is focused on addressing the challenges facing our nation's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes, we applaud your leadership to develop a national strategy to address global climate change.

Through their capacity to absorb and transport heat and carbon dioxide, oceans are a key driver of climate change processes. In addition, they are also undergoing significant short and long-term change over both large and small areas as evidenced by the increasing acidification of the oceans, climatic shifts associated with El Niño, dramatic changes in the amount of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean, rising sea level rise, and concern about possible abrupt climatic and ecological changes, particularly associated with shifts in ocean circulation.

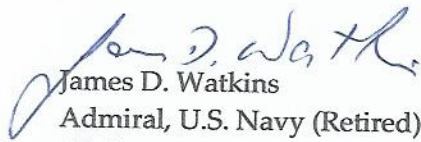
Unfortunately, chronic underfunding of ocean-related science has prevented us from capitalizing on new technology and innovative ideas that would help address huge information gaps and significantly advance our understanding of ocean processes. Improved understanding of these processes will greatly enhance our ability to predict the economic and ecological ramifications associated with climate change. This information will be essential as Congress balances competing demands in the development of new national policies to minimize and adapt to climate changes in the coming years and decades.

Developing coherent strategies for adapting to a changing environment will be as important as efforts to address future carbon emissions. We respectfully request that legislation being developed under your leadership include provisions that recognize and enhance ocean science, management, and education as important elements of a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing climate change.

We will be working with members of your leadership team, the Chairmen of Committees with jurisdiction over ocean-related issues, and other Members of Congress to pursue this

objective and offer the services of the Joint Initiative to help facilitate the development of draft legislation. Your staff may contact Joint Initiative staff at (202) 354-6444 for additional information or support.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy



The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Chairman, Pew Oceans Commission

cc: The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
The Honorable Nick J. Rahall  
The Honorable Bart Gordon  
The Honorable John D. Dingell  
The Honorable James L. Oberstar