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## Joint Ocean Commission Initiative to Recommend Efforts to Protect and Preserve of the Health of the West Coast

*Assisting State and Local Officials in California, Oregon, and Washington State in New Initiative*

**Washington, DC** –The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is pleased to announce the launch of a new initiative to help local and state governments in California, Oregon, and Washington State protect the ecological and economic value of ocean and coastal areas along the West Coast. The Joint Initiative, co-chaired by Admiral James D. Watkins, U.S. Navy (Ret.) and former Congressman Leon E. Panetta, will work with coastal elected officials to provide input and recommendations how local and state governments can implement ecosystem-based management, improve regional ocean governance, and incorporate sound science in decision making in California, Oregon and Washington in a manner consistent with the reports of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission.

“The Joint Initiative looks forward to working with the local and state leaders in California, Oregon, and Washington State to identify priorities and provide recommendations that are responsive to the protection and preservation of our valuable ocean and coastal resources and the communities that depend upon them,” said Admiral James D. Watkins, co-chair of the Joint Initiative. “We are pleased to have been given the opportunity to provide our expertise on how to work toward sound ocean and coastal policies,” Watkins continued.

This summer, state and local officials from the West Coast states contacted the Joint Initiative seeking assistance in launching this important initiative. The letter requested that the Joint Initiative, “provide a report identifying the highest priority actions that should be taken to ensure local governments and state legislators in Washington, Oregon, and California are able to effectively advance our mutual interest in vibrant, sustainable, and resilient coastal communities and ocean resources.” Signatories of the letter included:

James Auburn, Mayor, Port Orford, Oregon  
Janet Beautz, Supervisor, Santa Cruz County, California  
Sam Blakeslee, Assembly Member, California State  
Deborah Boone, Representative, Oregon State  
Al Carter, Commissioner, Grays Harbor County, Washington

Nancy Gardner, Council Member, New Port Beach, California  
Bill Hall, Commissioner, Lincoln County, Oregon  
Ken Jacobsen, Senator, Washington State  
Don Munks, Commissioner, Skagit County, Washington  
Pedro Nava, Assembly Member, California State

Greg Nickels, Mayor, Seattle, Washington  
Kevin Ranker, Councilman, San Juan County,  
Washington  
Ron Sims, Executive, King County,  
Washington

Pam Slater-Price, Supervisor, San Diego  
County, California  
Harriet Spanel, Senator, Washington State  
Darrell Steinberg, Senator, California State  
John Woolley, Supervisor, Humboldt County,  
California

“Protecting our oceans and coasts starts at the local level,” said Leon E. Panetta, co-chair of the Joint Initiative. “We are pleased to see so much interest in finding solutions to the critical problems facing our oceans and coasts. The Joint Initiative looks forward to providing the input that will lead to meaningful ocean policy reform at the state and local level,” Panetta continued.

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*The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission to catalyze ocean policy reform. The Initiative is guided by a ten-member Task Force, five from each Commission, and led by Admiral James D. Watkins and the Honorable Leon E. Panetta, chairs of the U.S. Commission and Pew Commission, respectively. The primary goal of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is to accelerate the pace of change that results in meaningful ocean policy reform. For more information, visit [www.jointoceancommission.org](http://www.jointoceancommission.org)*