

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL JANUARY 15, 2009

CONTACT:

Alyssa Oliveri, 202-293-6200 ext. 211 (w), 202-277-7074 (c)

Laura Cantral, 202-354-6444

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Releases Critical Ocean Policy Report for West Coast Leaders

Recommendations Aim to Protect the Ecosystems and Economies of the West Coast through Increased Collaboration among Local and State Officials

January 15, 2009 (Washington, D.C.) – The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative today released its much anticipated report, “One Coast, One Future: Securing the Health of West Coast Ecosystems and Economies.” The report, requested by 19 elected officials from California, Oregon and Washington State, offers guidance to local, state and federal leaders on how to improve the health of coastal ecosystems and the economies that depend on them through integrated decision making.

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

“One Coast, One Future” offers specific and immediate ways that local and state West Coast leaders can collaborate to implement a coordinated and more productive approach to managing the coast, as well as ways state legislatures and the federal government can support their efforts. The report urges these leaders to adapt and prepare for climate change impacts through an ecosystem-based approach that recognizes the interconnections among marine life, climate, local economies and the quality of human life. The report also acknowledges that many local West Coast communities currently face alternative energy proposals, and suggests ways that they can work with other communities, government agencies and developers to implement effective solutions to these pressing energy challenges. Recommendations in the report include the following:

1. Identify a coordination area and engage stakeholders in setting goals.
2. Understand and monitor ecosystem health.
3. Establish coordinating mechanisms to bring together all interested parties.
4. Make the land-sea connection.
5. Collect and integrate locally-relevant information to better inform decision -making.

6. Support integrated, ecosystem-based approaches, particularly at the local level.
7. Consider marine spatial planning.
8. Plan for climate change impacts at all levels of government.
9. Maintain or enhance funding for core coastal and ocean programs.
10. Send a clear message to Congress and the administration to fund and implement ocean protection measures.
11. Creatively consolidate or reallocate existing resources to take full advantage of funding sources.
12. Establish public-private partnerships for funding and in-kind resources.

“Communities along the coast have an incredibly important impact on regional and national economies by contributing to the tourism, boating and fishing industries, as well as the food supply,” said Admiral James D. Watkins (U.S. Navy, Ret.), co-chair of the Joint Initiative. “The elected officials who requested this report have shown tremendous initiative in exploring innovative ways to secure and preserve their environment, coasts, ocean and communities. We commend them for their leadership, and the next step will be for state legislatures and Congress to support and prioritize these critical efforts.”

For more information on the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, its work and to download the full version of “One Coast, One Future,” please visit www.jointoceancommission.org.

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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 Joint Initiative is guided by a ten-member task force, five from each commission, and led by Admiral James D. Watkins (U.S. Navy, Ret.) 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.