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Coastal Economies Depend on National Ocean Policy

New Report Calls for Effective Implementation of National Ocean Policy to Protect the Livelihoods of Millions of Americans

June 7, 2011 (Washington, D.C.) – Today, the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative called on national, state and local officials to support effective implementation of our nation’s first National Ocean Policy in order to protect local economies, support national industries and encourage innovation. In a report entitled “America’s Ocean Future: Ensuring Healthy Oceans to Support a Vibrant Economy,” the group offers recommendations to combat the major challenges threatening our oceans and the communities and jobs that depend on them, including declining water quality, depleted fish stocks, and ineffective ocean management that can lead to tragedies like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

“Our oceans are in crisis, threatening coastal communities as well as key pillars of the U.S. economy,” said the Honorable William Ruckelshaus, co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. “When the oceans are unhealthy, fishermen, business owners, and the U.S. economy at large feels the impact.”

The U.S. coastal economy generates almost 135 million jobs and more than \$6 trillion dollars in wages. The report outlines current threats to this economic engine and proposes solutions to protect the industries and communities that depend on our oceans.

In order to keep this engine from failing at a time when protecting jobs is one of our nation’s highest priorities, the report urges increased coordination among federal agencies to make sure they work efficiently, effectively and in support of the priorities of coastal regions, states and tribes. The report also calls for increased investments in high-quality ocean science and data collection to help support sound decision making. Top recommendations outlined in the report include:

- Federal policymakers should work to increase coordination among federal, regional, state, local and tribal bodies in order to reduce inefficiencies and conflict in the ocean management system.
- Ocean science should be improved and made more accessible in order to efficiently use federal, state, tribal, local and private-sector resources.
- Congress should establish an ocean investment fund dedicated to improving ocean and coastal science, management and ecosystem restoration at the federal, state and local levels.

“We have to use the best scientific information and the best management practices to take care of one of our country’s most prized and most productive natural and economic resources,” said the Honorable Norman Mineta, co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. “Our oceans are an incredible

public trust resource, and it is our obligation to protect their health and vitality for the benefit of Americans now and into the future.”

To read the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative’s report, 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. The primary goal of the Joint Initiative is to accelerate the pace of change that results in meaningful ocean policy reform.