

The Honorable Ted Stevens, Chairman
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Co-chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

July 20, 2005

Dear Senators Stevens and Inouye:

As chairs of the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission respectively, we are writing in support of the Committee's effort to approve reauthorizing legislation that would strengthen the Coastal Zone Management Act and enhance our ability to preserve coral reefs under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

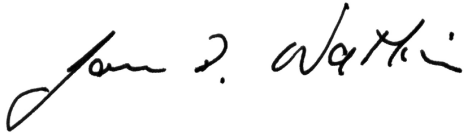
These two bills address key recommendations made in our respective reports, contributing to the growing momentum to improve our nation's ocean, coastal and Great Lakes policies generated by the Committee's continuing action on ocean-related legislation.

S. 1390, Coral Reef Conservation Amendments Act of 2005, addresses recommendations to enhance federal authority to undertake emergency response actions to prevent or mitigate imminent coral reef destruction from vessel or other physical damage, and in addition, authorizes much-needed increased funding for a coral reef conservation grants program. The bill also addresses recommendations to provide greater opportunities for local and region involvement by creating a new community-based planning grants program to implement locally designed coral management and protection plans.

S. 360, the Coastal Zone Enhancement Reauthorization Act, is responsive to recommendations to improve the planning and coordinating capabilities of coastal states, including support for federal and state community-based planning, strategies, and solutions to address pressing development issues in the coastal zone. The amendments would also help revitalize previously developed areas, promote conservation projects in environmentally sensitive areas, emphasize water dependent uses, protect coastal habitats, and promote the development and application of innovative coastal and estuarine environmental technology, methodological development, training, and information transfer through a cooperative program. Much work remains to be done to strengthen watershed and coastal zone management; however, S. 360 represents significant progress towards these goals.

Again, we commend the Committee's leadership in moving this key ocean-related legislation forward, and stand ready to assist your efforts to improve the health of our oceans and coastal waters.

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