

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chairwoman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

November 23, 2009

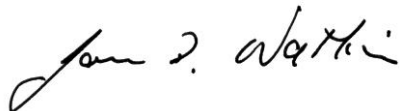
Dear Chairwoman Cantwell,

On behalf of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative we thank you for convening the November 4, 2009 Subcommittee hearing regarding The Future of Ocean Governance: Building Our National Ocean Policy. We applaud and greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment to improving governance of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. As you stated in your opening remarks, healthy oceans and coasts are crucial to sustaining our national economy and mitigating the impacts of climate change. However ocean and coastal stewardship is too-often dismissed as a secondary issue. The hearing has drawn much-needed attention to the vital importance of meaningful federal ocean governance reform, particularly establishment of a national ocean policy and effective mechanisms for implementing that policy.

As the White House Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force proceeds with its recommendations on a national ocean policy and framework for coastal and marine spatial planning, we urge the Subcommittee to continue to closely monitor progress on this effort and provide input that will facilitate its success. In addition, it is essential to note that while the Ocean Policy Task Force recommendations will be important, they represent only one step toward the ultimate goal of timely and effective implementation of meaningful ocean policy reform. Your leadership on this issue can ensure that a national ocean policy is established in law and that an effective and high-level leadership structure to implement that policy is put into place.

The Joint Initiative stands ready to assist you, Senator Snowe, and Subcommittee members in future hearings on this topic and any additional efforts that can help our nation achieve effective and coherent ocean governance, healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, and vibrant coastal economies and communities.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins  
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)  
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



William Ruckelshaus  
Commissioner, Joint Ocean Commission  
Initiative