

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, Capitol Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

July 27, 2006

Dear Senator Cochran,

We would like to convey our deep appreciation for the support provided for ocean-related programs in the FY 2007 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill reported out of Committee earlier this month. Funding provided for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Science Foundation, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is essential to build the nation's capacity to more fully understand and predict the changes in the health and productivity of coastal, ocean, and Great Lake environments.

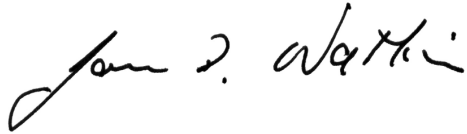
We are particularly pleased with the proposed investments in NOAA and your recognition of the priorities recommended by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (Joint Initiative) in its recent report, *From Sea to Shining Sea*. The funding proposed in the C-J-S spending bill will provide NOAA with essential resources to continue and expand its progress toward meeting the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, the Pew Oceans Commission, and the Joint Initiative. The members of the Joint Initiative and others in the ocean community are heartened by your strong action and grateful for the support you and your staff have provided.

We will continue our efforts to secure support for the C-J-S FY 2007 spending bill as it comes under consideration before the full Senate as well as during the conference with the House. As the bill moves forward, we hope that there will be an opportunity to address the elimination of funding for NOAA's Ocean and Human Health Initiative. Support for Oceans and Human Health has been a high priority for the Commissions and the Joint Initiative and is one of the six themes in the Administration's draft Ocean Research Priorities Plan. Given the growing importance of health-related issues, we hope to work with you to restore funding for the program.

We recognize the difficult budget environment and limitations facing the Committee as it identifies funding priorities and greatly appreciate the leadership and support you have

provided on ocean-related programs in the FY 2007 spending bill. We also extend our thanks to TA Hawks, whose support and guidance during the past year has been invaluable. You can count on our continued assistance in the effort to secure a robust and balanced spending plan for oceans, coasts, and the Great Lakes the coming fiscal year.

Sincerely,



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



The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission  
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative