



The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman
The Committee on Appropriations
The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
The Committee on Appropriations
The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

January 6, 2009

Dear Chairmen Inouye and Mikulski, and Ranking Members Cochran and Shelby:

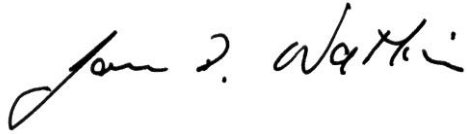
On behalf of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, we thank you for your leadership in ensuring strong support for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies portion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Omnibus Spending Bill. The allocation of almost \$4.7 billion to NOAA represents a positive step toward achieving healthy and sustainable oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. With this budget NOAA will be able to continue making progress in areas critical to the health of our coastal and ocean economies, communities, and ecosystems.

Our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes play a crucial role in maintaining a strong national economy and high quality of life for all American citizens, but declining ecosystem health threatens the valuable goods and services they provide. Climate change further exacerbates these challenges with additional impacts such as heightened sea levels and acidification of ocean waters. The ocean and coastal science and management needed to understand and address these impacts have for years been chronically underfunded, but the Committee's leadership has begun to reverse this alarming trend.

The recent release of the Administration's Ocean Policy Task Force's *Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning* and its pending final recommendations to the President for the implementation of a national ocean policy may soon lead to important ocean governance reforms. Consequently, the need for NOAA products and service will continue to grow, and we are hopeful that future budget requests and allocations will be responsive to these demands.

We urge your continued leadership on this critical funding need and stand ready to assist you in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



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



William Ruckelshaus
Commissioner, Joint Ocean Commission
Initiative