

Co-Chairs

The Honorable
Norman Mineta
The Honorable
Christine Todd Whitman

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans

Members

March 20, 2018

Frances Beinecke

Donald Boesch, Ph.D.

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva, Subcommittee Chairman Lamborn and Subcommittee Ranking Member Huffman,

Lillian Borrone

The Honorable
Norman Dicks

Quenton Dokken, Ph.D.

As Co-Chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (Joint Initiative), a bipartisan, collaborative group of senior leaders whose primary goal is to catalyze ocean policy reform, we are writing to express our support for H.R. 2748, The Save Our Seas Act of 2017.

Vice Admiral

Paul Gaffney, U.S. Navy
(Retired)

Robert Gagosian, Ph.D.

Sherri Goodman

Scott Gudes

Vice Admiral

Conrad Lautenbacher, Ph.D.
U.S. Navy (Retired)

Over the past two decades, the Joint Initiative has become increasingly alarmed at the quantities of marine debris littering our oceans. Every year, eight million tons of marine debris wash into the ocean, from microbeads to fishing gear to large containers. This debris leaches hormone disruptors, carcinogens, and other harmful chemicals into marine ecosystems, contaminating seafood, entangling marine life, and threatening human health and the longevity of marine tourism. Due to its diverse range of sources, marine debris is inherently difficult to prevent and control.

Margaret Leinen, Ph.D.

Christopher Lischewski

The Honorable
Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.

Julie Packard

The Honorable
Leon Panetta

Authorized by the Marine Debris Act of 2006, NOAA's Marine Debris Program investigates and prevents the adverse impacts of marine debris. Over the past twelve years, NOAA's Marine Debris Program has done tremendous work to research marine debris, reduce quantities of marine debris, and prevent future marine pollution through outreach and education. However, the growing global scale of marine debris necessitates increased collaboration and consistent funding for current efforts.

John Pappalardo

The Honorable
Pietro Parravano

Diane Regas

Randy Repass

Andrew Rosenberg, Ph.D.

The Save Our Seas Act secures desperately needed funding, support, and coordination for NOAA's Marine Debris Program. Specifically, it authorizes appropriations for the Marine Debris Act for each fiscal year from 2018 through 2022 and enables the NOAA Administrator to provide assistance following severe marine debris events, such as hurricanes. Moreover, by expanding the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee to include Department of State and Department of Interior representatives, the Save Our Seas Act also increases governmental efficiency by improving governmental coordination.

The Honorable

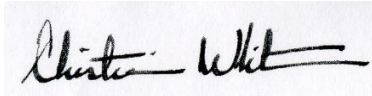
William Ruckelshaus

Paul Sandifer, Ph.D.

While recycling programs, beach clean ups, citizen science initiatives, plastic bag taxes, and international commitments to reduce marine debris have all shown promise, cleaning the ocean will require sustained commitment and action by

governments and consumers alike. The Senate has already recognized the importance of this bill, passing the Senate Companion version of the Save Our Seas Act (S. 756) on August 3, 2017. We urge you to advance H.R. 2748 so that we as a nation may move one step closer to ensuring clean seas for future generations. The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative remains dedicated to helping you and other U.S. leaders address the global challenge of marine debris.

Sincerely,



Christine Todd Whitman
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



Norman Y. Mineta
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative