Governor Whitman to Co-Chair the Joint Initiative with Norm Mineta

We are pleased to announce that Christine Todd Whitman will be joining Norm Mineta as the Co-Chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. Previously, she served as Administrator of the EPA (2001-03) and, prior to that, as Governor of New Jersey (1994-2001). Governor Whitman is the Founder and current President of the Whitman Strategy Group. Bill Ruckelshaus will be stepping down as Co-Chair, but will remain on the Leadership Council.
Spring 2016: JOCI announces new Co-Chair, hosts the West Coast Roundtable, engages Congress and the Administration.

Greetings and welcome to the Joint Initiative Spring 2016 Newsletter.

JOCI is pleased to announce that Governor Christine Todd Whitman will be working to advance critical ocean policy issues as the Co-Chair of the JOCI Leadership Council. Governor Whitman has been an valuable member of the Leadership Council since she joined the Council in 2014. We are looking forward to working with Governor Whitman in this new role. Bill Ruckelshaus will be stepping down as Co-Chair, but will continue to be a member of the Leadership Council. We greatly appreciate Bill's commitment to the Joint Initiative and his many years of insightful leadership.

Since our last update, JOCI has been busy implementing its strategy by cultivating the awareness, leadership, and commitment necessary to ensure that actions are taken to improve the way we use and manage our oceans and coasts. In January, we traveled to Seattle to meet with West Coast leaders and key stakeholders about ocean priorities in the region. As an extension of the roundtable, JOCI Co-Chair Bill Ruckelshaus and Leadership Council members Jane Lubchenco and Leon Panetta published an op-ed in The Seattle Times arguing that our oceans and coasts should be a priority for Congress and the Administration. As we head to New Orleans for our fourth and final roundtable, JOCI looks forward to compiling the ideas and recommendations identified at these meetings in our Ocean Action Agenda and communicating those regional priorities and key messages to the next set of leaders who will take office after the 2016 elections.

In addition to regional engagement, JOCI has been busy with other activities that elevate critical ocean policy issues that need to be addressed by the current and future Congress and Administration. In December, JOCI conveyed many of the insights we gathered from Arctic leaders at a Capitol Hill Briefing on Arctic issues. JOCI Co-Chair Norm Mineta and Leadership Council members Norm Dicks and Sherri Goodman were joined on the panel by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Admiral Robert Papp, the U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic. In this issue, we discuss progress on JOCI’s strategy, recent activities, and meetings with key leaders.

We also share insights from our interview with the outgoing Co-Chair and recent Medal of Freedom recipient, Bill Ruckelshaus. We hope that you enjoy our Spring 2016 Newsletter and encourage you to check out our website for more information on what JOCI has planned!

Remembering Patten White
We are deeply saddened to report the passing of Patten White. Pat was an original member of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Leadership Council. He was a strong voice and an advocate for fishermen on the Pew Oceans Commission as it developed recommendations for national ocean policy. He was also the Executive Director of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association for many years. In 2011, Pat received the Captain David H. Hart Award from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Pat was known as a man of his word. What made him so effective was the integrity and authenticity with which he approached people. He spoke his mind, honest and clear, gaining him both respect and credibility. Pat will be remembered for his dedication to the fishing community and ocean and coastal issues. He was a friend and mentor to many. We will miss him, and his sense of humor, greatly.

In the words of fellow JOCI Leadership Council member John Pappalardo, "Pat was a friend and a mentor for me in my early days of public policy work. He was an early standard-bearer for how to do your job. He maintained a sense of humor and always found a way to smile."

Fellow JOCI Leadership Council member Pietro Parravano also shared his memories of Pat, "Pat's life was all about his family and fishing. He treated them as treasures of the land and sea. I was privileged to be with him as a member of the Pew Oceans Commission and JOCI. He will be remembered for his vision for improving the lives of commercial fishermen. He did it with honesty, compassion, and dedication. I will always remember Pat for his friendship and kindness."

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**Joint Initiative Highlights**

**JOCI Submits Testimony to House and Senate Appropriation Committees | March 2016**

In March 2016, JOCI submitted testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for NOAA, NSF, and NASA, as well as testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee of the same name, urging incremental but significant increases for programs necessary to understand, protect, and restore our oceans and coasts. This testimony urged prioritizing a number of issue areas in FY 2017 including coastal resilience, ocean acidification, the Arctic, sustained ocean observations, sustainable fisheries, ocean exploration, science, research, and education.

**JOCI Supports New Arctic Initiatives | March 2016**

JOCI expressed support for the new joint effort between the U.S. and Canada for the protection and management of the Arctic. The agreement addresses issues related to climate change, renewable energy, marine conservation, traditional knowledge and cultural respect in the Arctic region and includes commitments for action from both the Obama and Trudeau Administrations. The need for increased international cooperation was voiced by Arctic leaders at the JOCI's Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtables last year.
West Coast Ocean Leadership Roundtable | January 2016

On January 27, 2016, JOCI held the West Coast Ocean Leadership Roundtable in Seattle which brought together high-level leaders and influencers from local, state, and federal government, conservation, industry, science, and philanthropy. In the months leading up to the West Coast Roundtable, JOCI Leadership Council members and staff met with high-level leaders and experts to gather their input on the meeting agenda and corresponding materials. Discussions at the West Coast Roundtable focused the importance of observation and monitoring in supporting decision-making, the successes of state initiatives, the challenges associated with changing ocean chemistry, and the need for infrastructure investments. The conversations highlighted many potential areas of improvement that will help inform JOCI’s Ocean Action Agenda. As part of the outreach around the roundtable, JOCI Co-Chair Bill Ruckelshaus and JOCI Leadership Council members Jane Lubchenco and Leon Panetta published an op-ed in The Seattle Times emphasizing the importance of our oceans and the urgent nature of the challenges we face.

Securing Increased Funding for Ocean Priorities | December 2015 - January 2016

Prior to the announcement of the FY16 Budget, JOCI submitted letters to House and Senate appropriators urging them to fund important ocean priorities. The final budget generally reflects the priorities JOCI outlined.

An important item included in the budget is the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund. The Joint Initiative has called for the creation of a dedicated oceans fund since the concept was initially proposed by both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission more than a decade ago. JOCI Leadership Council members Scott Gudes and Sherri Goodman and JOCI staff met with staff from the Office of Management and Budget to discuss, in addition to JOCI’s other priorities, funding for the NOCS. President Obama’s FY17 Budget requests $10 million for the Fund.

JOCI and Arctic Caucus Co-Host Capitol Hill Briefing on the Arctic | December 2015

As part of our continuing efforts to communicate regional ocean policy priorities to leaders on Capitol Hill on December 15, 2015, JOCI hosted a briefing on Arctic policy priorities for Congressional staff as a follow-up from last year’s Arctic Roundtable. Leadership Council members Norm Mineta, Norm Dicks, and Sherri Goodman served on a panel alongside Admiral Robert Papp, U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic, to discuss U.S. Arctic policy challenges and opportunities. We were also joined by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), who provided brief opening remarks

JOCI Co-Chair Bill Ruckelshaus receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom | November 2015

On November 24, 2015, JOCI Co-Chair Bill Ruckelshaus was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation’s highest civilian honor presented to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. Bill is the second Leadership Council Member to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, his fellow Co-Chair Norm Mineta received it in 2006.
Congrats, Bill!

**JOCI attended Our Oceans 2015 conference in Chile | October 2015**

For the second Our Oceans conference, world leaders gathered in Chile to take action to better protect and manage our oceans and coasts. [These actions](#) are important steps toward protecting marine ecosystems and should be implemented in conjunction with other efforts that address the wide range of challenges facing the world’s oceans. JOCI's Executive Director was invited to participate in the proceedings and was [interviewed by the Washington Post](#) about the Obama Administration's announcements from the conference.

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**Leadership Council Spotlight with Bill Ruckelshaus**

Bill Ruckelshaus is the outgoing Co-Chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and currently the Strategic Director at the Madrona Venture Group. Previously, Mr. Ruckelshaus served as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's first Administrator when the agency was formed in 1970 and was appointed by President Ronald Reagan as the fifth EPA Administrator in 1983. He was a commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. He was recently awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama.

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While at JOCI's West Coast Roundtable in January, the newsletter team sat down with Bill Ruckelshaus to discuss his view of ocean issues, the founding of the EPA, the importance of public service, and collaborative approaches.

**You have had a long and varied career working on complex environmental issues, how did you become interested and involved in ocean policy?**

When I was asked to join the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy by President Bush, it was very clear from the Commission’s charge that we were looking at a lot of important issues that needed to be addressed. A commission is one way of doing that, but for me it was also a way to learn. For someone who has been involved in many aspects of environmental policy, I enjoy jobs a lot more when I am learning new things as opposed to jobs where I already know a lot.
A lot of the scientific findings were things that I was not previously aware of, like ocean acidification. I was aware of how these issues affected the land, but I had not studied the oceans as such, nor was my responsibility at EPA directed at the oceans. Serving on the Commission and working on ocean policy was interesting to me because it was a learning experience.

You recently won the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation’s highest civilian honor, for your career in public service. Is there any professional accomplishment you are the proudest of? Why?

Yes, the beginning of the EPA. The EPA started with 6,000 people and 15 agencies and pieces of agencies that were put under one roof. We had a lot of inherent conflicts. For example, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was tasked with regulating what the pesticide office in the Department of Agriculture was created to promote. It was also a very exciting time because we had to establish our willingness to enforce the laws. Some of these laws, like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, were very stringent. People are still complaining about them.

It was my belief that we were going through a time of profound mistrust of government, much like we are now. It was during and after the Vietnam War, and for EPA to be successful it had to show that it was willing to protect public health. It was called the Environmental Protection Agency, but it might as well have been called the Public Health Protection Agency because that’s what we were charged with improving the most. I thought we had to get aggressive about enforcing the law. We sued Atlanta, Cleveland, and Detroit all in one day. We sued a number of large corporations that people thought the government would never go after because they were too influential. I felt that if we didn’t do that, we would lose two things: We would lose credibility among the regulated and, most importantly, we would lose credibility with the American people who didn’t think the government would respond to their demands to protect their health and environment.

The way you describe support for the EPA around the time of its founding seems to be very different than how it is perceived now. If the EPA was about public health then, what is the case for the EPA now?

A lot of what EPA does is still about protecting public health. Climate change is, in large part, about public health. In one sense, the EPA is a victim of its own success. The problems that were driving public opinion were problems people could smell, touch, and feel, like rivers lighting on fire and oil spills in Santa Barbara. There was terrible air pollution in places like Denver and Los Angeles — it was like China is today. People forget that. Those problems were essentially solved by the early EPA. Now we have more subtle problems. Still toxic issues in some cases, but not so visibly. As a result, there isn’t the same public demand now that we had then.

Let me give you an example. In 1972, Nixon was 20 points ahead of McGovern in the middle of October. Then, Congress passed the Clean Water Act and Nixon vetoed it with two weeks to go until the election. Within 48 hours, Congress overwhelmingly overrode his veto. The reason was that these members of Congress were hearing from the public “don’t you let that water get dirty.” Nixon’s objections were to the bill itself, not the idea of cleaning up the water. The differences between then and now have to do with public pressure.

During the President’s remarks at the Medal of Freedom ceremony, he said that you ”never really retired” and highlighted your work on the Puget Sound and other local issues. What motivated you to focus more on local issues in the latter half of your career?

Well, I live here. To me, if you are a citizen of a community and you have the capacity, based on your background or whatever, you have an obligation to help solve problems in your community. I was in a position to do a lot more than other people. Not because I am genius, but I had some credibility because of my background. So I got involved in salmon recovery and the Puget Sound recovery. I enjoy it. I would rather do that than sit around the house.

Other than climate change, what do you think is the biggest issue facing our oceans?

That is a good question because one of the things JOCI is trying to do through the Regional Ocean Leadership Roundtables is to break problems down into smaller pieces. I think that the solvable problems are where the ocean meets land. To the extent that we can understand the interaction between the ocean and land, which is very much a regional assessment, we need to ensure that the land and oceans are being managed in a way that is beneficial for the creatures in the ocean and land and the people on land. The way that land is managed affects the ocean. It is important to have some sort of process for engaging the people that live near the ocean; they have a big stake in that interaction being managed successfully. That’s why I believe we can make a lot of progress on big issues by using collaborative processes.