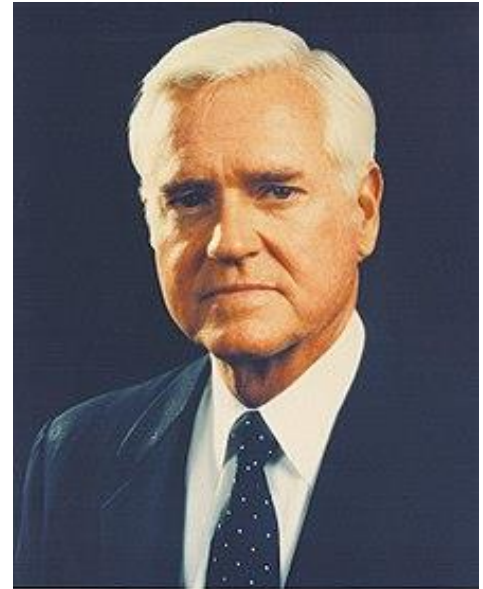


Joint Initiative Statement on Death of Ocean Champion Senator Ernest “Fritz” Hollings

April 10, 2019

Today we write in sadness at the loss of a beloved ocean champion and U.S. statesman. In his 55-year career in public service, Senator Ernest “Fritz” Hollings of South Carolina, who passed away on April 6 at the age of 97, generated lasting impacts on our oceans and coasts.

Senator Hollings, who was a native of Charleston, South Carolina and a graduate of the Citadel and University of South Carolina Law School began his political career in the South Carolina House of Representatives (1949-1954). He was later elected Lieutenant Governor for the state and then in 1958 was elected Governor of South Carolina. From 1966 to 2005, he served brilliantly in the U.S. Senate, establishing himself as a visionary leader of, among many worthy causes, protecting and restoring our oceans and coasts.



In his 38 years in the Senate, Senator Hollings’s leadership was instrumental in passing trailblazing legislation including the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, among others. We will forever be indebted to Senator Hollings for leading the effort to pass the Oceans Act of 2000, the legislation which created JOCI’s predecessor the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP). The Oceans Act charged the USCOP with undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the nation’s ocean and coastal policies and offering recommendations for how to improve and update those policies. Its recommendations have guided JOCI’s work for the past fifteen years and catalyzed the development of comprehensive ocean policies, including the National Ocean Policy. Before leaving the Senate, Senator Hollings authored the Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection Act and the Oceans and Human Health Act. Over his career, he worked to significantly increase national attention for ocean and coastal conservation and research.

The Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship, which was established in 2005 when Senator Hollings retired from Congress, honors his legacy by bolstering undergraduate training in NOAA mission sciences, as well as increasing environmental literacy. We look forward to reading and hearing more stories about Senator Hollings in the days to come and to carrying forward his legacy of “pragmatic conservationism” and public service.