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Joint Initiative Statement on the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act

October 22, 2020 – House Natural Resources Committee Chair Grijalva (D-AZ) and Congressman Castor (D-FL) [recently unveiled](#) the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, along with an impressive range of bill endorsers. This forward-looking legislation is the culmination of several domestic and international landmark efforts to ensure that the oceans are central to swift and effective action to address the devastating impacts of changes to our climate. The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (JOCI) supports these efforts to develop pragmatic legislative approaches to ensure sound stewardship of our ocean communities, economies, and ecosystems.

This legislation is "a booming wake-up call to the climate community. Until today, ocean climate solutions have been mostly out of sight, out of mind in the U.S.," said former NOAA Administrator and JOCI Leadership Council Member Jane Lubchenco during a press conference with House members.

JOCI has long been a champion for bipartisan solutions to ocean issues, and there is no greater issue threatening the ocean and all who rely on it than the climate crisis. This visionary legislation advances the dialogue on several important issues including blue carbon ecosystems, ocean protections, climate-ready fisheries, coastal resiliency, offshore energy, and ocean health. By implementing a full suite of ocean-based climate solutions, this legislation would help frontline communities most at risk in the face of climate change and increase the resilience of our ocean ecosystems. It would improve national security by placing the United States back in a leadership role in the global effort to address the ravages of climate change.

JOCI applauds the introduction of this legislation as a promising and long overdue opportunity for more focused conversations in the Congress to develop bipartisan solutions to ocean issues. The Act spurs research and development, encourages interagency coordination, and introduces achievable goals and targets. The tools provided by this legislation will enable the Administration and Congress to effectively manage our ocean resources in ways that significantly lower carbon emissions, address climate impacts, and make our coastal communities safer.

Our oceans and coasts serve as the lifeblood of American communities from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico, creating economic opportunity and generating prosperity. The [Special Report](#) on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, illustrated the dire impacts on our oceans if we fail to act on climate. The future of ocean industries, the communities that rely on the ocean, and ocean ecosystems that underpin them is under threat. JOCI stands ready to help Congress move the dialogue forward to address the ocean-climate linkages critical to the health and prosperity of the American people.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative brings together all sectors of the ocean community to catalyze action and monitor progress toward meaningful ocean policy reform. Meridian Institute serves as the secretariat for the Joint Initiative.