

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

April 15, 2010

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and
Science
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
and Science
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

Our oceans and coasts provide great economic and environmental wealth for the nation. From food to fuel, we rely on oceans; their resources are major drivers of the U.S. economy. Nearly 80 percent of U.S. import and export freight is transported through seaports. Jobs and economic opportunities that emerge from our oceans, Great Lakes, and coastal resources generate more than 50 percent of our nation's Gross Domestic Product and provide over 70 million jobs to Americans. The nation is on the cusp of major developments that will produce new "blue" jobs in ocean energy development, fisheries, marine drugs and natural product development, maritime trade, science, and other industries. In short, our oceans and coasts, the "Blue Economy," serve as economic lifelines for the nation.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) programs and services are vital to the sound management and stewardship of our oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes. We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support for NOAA. It is crucial we provide robust funding for NOAA to sustain its existing missions and meet the emerging needs of the American people. Increased funding for NOAA is needed to strengthen scientific research that underlies management and policy decisions, such as fisheries management, and to improve ocean and coastal stewardship. Specifically, we request your support for the following programs in the Fiscal Year 2011 Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill. These programs will continue to strengthen and grow our Blue Economy.

Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) – In 2009, Congress enacted the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observing Act to support a federal-regional partnership to collect and deliver data and information about our oceans and coasts to support decision-making. IOOS provides public officials, businesses, resource managers, and others with data and information to improve the safety and efficiency of marine operations; strengthen predictions of coastal hazards; protect and restore healthy ecosystems; and promote economic development. An investment of \$53 million in FY2011, including \$33 million for regional IOOS, will provide new observing, modeling, and visualization technologies, support observing platforms for deploying sensors, and establish regional data information centers. NOAA will use a competitive process to allocate funding to regional associations, thereby ensuring that the American public receives the greatest return for its investment in the form of a nationally consistent system for critical ocean information, forecasts and timely warnings.

National Sea Grant Program – Sea Grant is a partnership between NOAA and 32 university-based programs that addresses national, regional, and local coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes issues. Sea Grant produces a wide range of applied and basic marine scientific research and provides education, training, and technical assistance programs that promote the understanding and management of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. Sea Grant research and outreach provide coastal communities and industries with the best available science-based information for decision-making, coupled with the knowledge, experience and tools needed to bring diverse coastal interests together. We request \$79.38 million for the National Sea Grant Program in FY2011, the amount authorized in the National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2008.

Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) – Every American is connected to our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. They support commerce, tourism, recreation, and vital industries. Our coastal zone, which makes up only 17 percent of the land area of the United States, is home to 53 percent of the nation's population. Strong coastal communities and healthy coastal ecosystems are vital to our economy. However, our coasts are vulnerable to unsustainable development, natural hazards such as sea level rise, hurricanes, and flooding, and conflicting uses. The CZMP is a federal-state partnership designed to balance the protection of our coastal and ocean resources with the need for sustainable development of coastal communities. The program helps reduce environmental impacts of coastal development, resolve conflicts between competing coastal uses, and provide critical assistance to local communities in coastal planning and resource protection. The CZMP's state grants have essentially remained level-funded for 8 years, resulting in a decreased capacity in the state coastal zone management programs and less funding being granted to local communities. States and territories are unable to keep up with the increasing complex coastal challenges, including the preparation for and siting of proposed alternative energy facilities in near shore waters and strengthen coastal resiliency. We request \$112.4 million for the CZMP in FY2011.

Ocean Acidification – Oceans play an essential role in regulating the climate and levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the oceans have absorbed about one third of the carbon dioxide produced by human activities. Our oceans and marine ecosystems are not escaping unscathed. We are slowly acidifying the water threatening coral reefs and shellfish and the livelihoods of the communities and people that rely on them. Globally, the world's coral reefs provide \$29.8 billion in economic benefits by supporting tourism, coastal protection, fisheries, and biodiversity. The U.S. shellfish industry is valued at over \$2.1 billion. Greater research and monitoring is necessary to understand how ocean acidification is impacting marine ecosystems and species and to develop strategies to help coastal and ocean industries address these changes. We request \$20 million in FY2011, the level authorized in the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act of 2009.

Oceans and Human Health Initiative (OHHI) – The Oceans and Human Health Initiative (OHHI) supports cutting-edge research to improve the understanding and management of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes to enhance the benefits to human health and reduce public health risks. OHHI supports scientific research, education, and training that increases our knowledge about the connections between human health and the oceans and results in practical applications to improve public health. It has produced valuable tool and important environmental information to help ensure safe beaches, seafood and recreational waters, and has promoted the discovery of new pharmaceuticals with beneficial health products. Unfortunately, a lack of funding is leading to the demise of the external grant program, which brought some of

the best science to bear on coastal and ocean health problems. One area of new potential is “blue” pharmaceuticals. The greatest diversity of life on earth is found below the water’s surface, making the ocean a natural place to look today for new products to fight cancer or cure diseases. An investment of \$12 million in FY2011 would strengthen the future competitiveness of the United States in oceans and human health research and improve the public health by predicting and forecasting ocean and coastal threats.

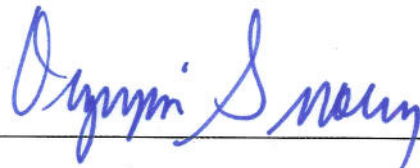
National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) –The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) is a network of 27 areas representing different regions of the United States that are protected for long-term research, water-quality monitoring, education and coastal stewardship. NERRS works with local communities and regional groups to address natural resource management issues, such as non-point source pollution, habitat restoration and invasive species. Research and training conducted within the System improves management of our coastal resources. Through its integrated research and education and state-federal partnerships, NERRS plays a critical role in national efforts to sustain healthy estuarine and coastal communities. We request \$48.6 million for NERRS in FY2011.

We recognize the fiscal constraints facing the Subcommittee in crafting the FY 2011 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill and believe that protecting, maintaining, and restoring marine and Great Lakes’ health through economic development, science, and management programs represent a wise investment in America’s future. We appreciate the Subcommittee’s past support of NOAA and look forward to working with you. Thank you for your consideration.

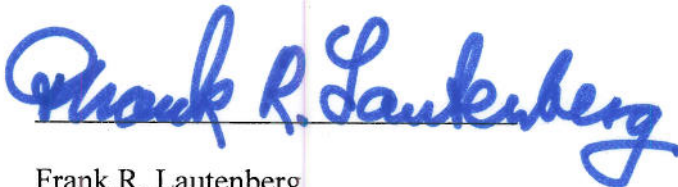
Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator
Chair, Subcommittee on Oceans,
Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard



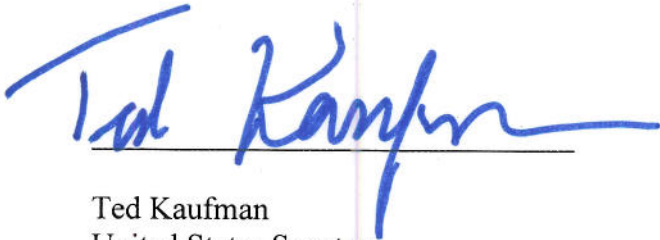
Olympia Snowe
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oceans,
Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard



Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



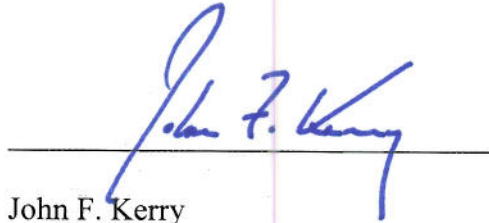
Roland W. Burris
United States Senator



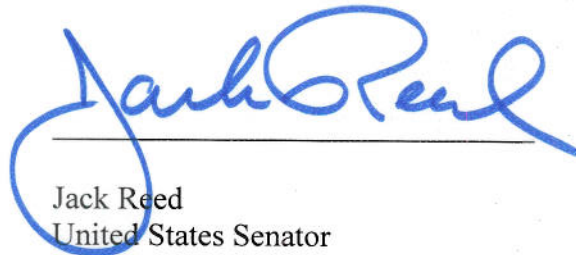
Ted Kaufman
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



John F. Kerry
United States Senator



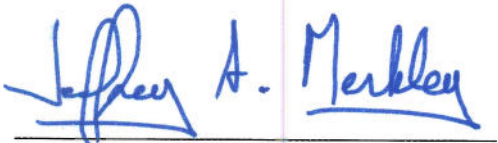
Jack Reed
United States Senator



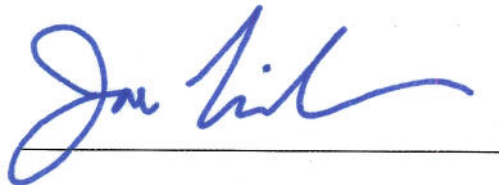
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



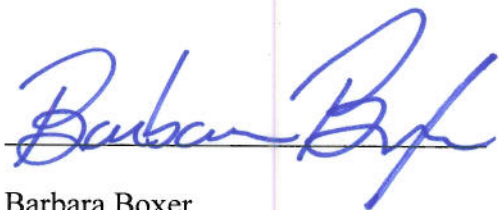
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



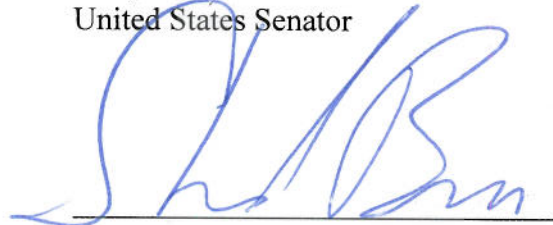
Jeff Merkley
United States Senator




Joseph Lieberman
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Carl Levin
United States Senator

Daniel K. Akaka

Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senator

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

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Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Bill Nelson

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Ben Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator