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Under the Sea with Sigourney: An Exclusive Interview

Sigourney Weaver discusses *Acid Test*, ocean acidification and what the oceans mean to her.

January 1, 2010 at 8:00am by Gloria Dawson | [comment](#)

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Sigourney Weaver speaks about the ocean with intensity. She talks about her father, a Navy man, who always had to be close to the sea. She, like many of us, loved the ocean growing up, but took it for granted. When she talks she looks you straight in the eye and speaks with such conviction that if she was selling the oceans you'd ask to buy two. I'm suddenly very glad that this amazing actress is using her power as a celebrity for good. Weaver is once again putting her persuasion to good use by narrating an environmental film. Previously she lent her voice to the Discovery Channel's version of [Planet Earth](#). This time she's featured in *Acid Test*, a Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) film about ocean acidification. Sigourney Weaver spoke to The Daily Green before the film's screening at the Museum of Art and Design in New York City.



Weaver is at once intense and humble. Humbled by the vastness, the importance of the ocean. And humbled by the people who know so much about the issues and by those who do so much for the oceans. She readily defers to ocean NRDC's Senior Scientist [Lisa Suatoni](#), who has been making appearances with her to promote the film. Weaver hopes *Acid Test* will show people what we're risking. As a frightened citizen herself she said she felt privileged to narrate the film because she felt it was important to "get the word out to other families."



Weaver talks about getting the word out, about awareness, a term that I normally cringe at when it comes to environmental topics. I tend to think, "We are all aware. What we need now is to do something." But ocean acidification truly needs awareness. It isn't on the public radar like global warming or wildlife extinction is. The good news is that ocean acidification is a lot easier to explain and harder to deny, then say, the rise in atmospheric temp. It's "simple chemistry," Suatoni says. On her NRDC blog she explains, "Ocean acidification is a second impact of rising atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations and the process is surprisingly simple. About 1/4 to 1/3 of the carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels is absorbed by the seas. As carbon dioxide enters the ocean, it reacts with seawater to form an acid. This acid poses a very direct stress to organisms with shells, as it is corrosive.

However, it presents a physiological stress to a range of other organisms as well." Basically, ocean acidification is undeniably caused by humans, and if we continue releasing so much CO₂ into the environment the oceans will become corrosive to many organisms within the next 20-30 years. That means, among other things, sea creatures will suffer and may become extinct, and that there will be a depletion of our reefs. Now that's the bad news.

Weaver and Suatoni were just in Washington speaking to Senator Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ. He saw the film and immediately asked for copies for every senator. During a Senate climate hearing he mentions the film and discusses ocean acidification in general, "It's not widely acknowledged but the facts are that our oceans generate more income then the entire agricultural sector" -- yet another reason to take this cause seriously. Talk about gaining awareness! This film is being discussed in Washington, available free online and teaching materials are available for schools. Weaver believes the film will resonate with small children because "they identify with shrimps because they already feel like shrimps. And they can imagine not being able to make their home." She imagines these children being moved by *Acid Test* and going home to tell their parents about ocean acidification.

It would be hard to imagine someone not being moved by this film. It shows you all of the beauty of the underwater world and then periodically overlays those images with scientists and fishermen speaking about the dangers of losing all of this beauty (and losing delicious seafood as well). The film shows both the sides of the sea, above and below water -- powerful waves and delicate sea creatures practically translucent. You at once see the beauty and understand the risk -- all to the sounds of a hauntingly beautiful soundtrack and Sigourney Weaver's voice leading you into the deep sea.

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