



U.S. States Call for Ocean Climate Action at COP26

Date: Wednesday, November 10, 2021

To: Office of President Joe Biden

Cc:

Chair Gina McCarthy, National Climate Task Force

Chair Brenda Mallory, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Dr. Eric Lander, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

Secretary Deb Haaland, Department of Interior

Secretary Jennifer Granholm, Department of Energy

Secretary Gina Raimondo, Department of Commerce

Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Department of Transportation

Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, Department of State

Dr. Rick Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere & NOAA Administrator

President Biden:

National, state, Tribal and municipal governments increasingly recognize the important relationship between climate and ocean change. The ocean has absorbed large amounts of carbon dioxide and excess heat from fossil fuel combustion, making our ocean warmer, more acidified, more stratified and oxygen depleted.

From oyster die-offs and coral reef bleaching to marine heat waves and harmful algal blooms, coastal communities in the United States and around the world are feeling the effects on fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and marine ecosystems that are important for sustaining jobs, coastal economies and cultures, indigenous ways of life, and for feeding people.

We applaud ambitious targets set forth in the United States' Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce GHG emissions by 50-52 percent by 2030 and ensure a more resilient future. Setting and achieving ambitious emission targets is the most important step in turning the tide of climate impacts on our ocean.

We know that marine nature-based solutions and ocean-based sectors can play a role in achieving mitigation targets at domestic and local scales. Additionally, we must increase science-based adaptation and resiliency strategies across our coastlines and in partnership with our coastal communities.

At COP26, we join others in commending the creation of Biden- Harris Administration's Ocean Policy Committee and encourage the design and implementation of an ambitious U.S. Ocean Climate Action Plan. We are additionally calling for the Biden Administration, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to join the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification. By taking these actions, the United States can also "lead by doing" internationally, allowing our



domestic actions to rebuild our credibility while providing aid and technical assistance aimed at supporting rapid uptake of global solutions and equity for the most vulnerable nations.

As U.S. states, we will continue our efforts to implement on-the-ground actions that address ocean climate impacts. We commit our support to the following actions and we call on others, including our federal partners, to join us in leading on ocean and climate action:



- (1) Implement **aggressive climate action through carbon emissions reductions**; achieving ambitious emission reductions targets is the most important step in turning the tide of climate impacts on our ocean.
- (2) **Increase mitigation and adaptation through natural and working lands, nature-based solutions, and blue carbon** measures which will also support the implementation of federal 30 X 30 goals and targets.
- (3) Upgrade and modernize **wastewater and stormwater systems that can help reduce local and land based source contributions of pollution** that further exacerbate coastal warming, acidification, and deoxygenation.
- (4) **Integrate the ocean into international climate policy efforts** on an ongoing basis, such as pathways recommended by the UNFCCC Climate and Ocean Dialogue. Sharing information on ocean solutions and actions can help us all do more to reduce ocean and coastal impacts and build resilience faster.
- (5) Increase international, domestic and regional **finance for science-based ocean mitigation and resilience strategies**—including actionable science to inform policy and the robust implementation UN SDG 14.3 which requires targeted monitoring at regional scales “to minimize and address OA.”
- (6) **Integrate ocean actions into climate policies at the domestic level**, including through the creation of Ocean Climate Action Plans and OA Action Plans.
- (7) **Ensure Tribal sovereigns, First Nations and indigenous peoples’ knowledge, leadership and priorities as well as those of overburdened communities are reflected** across ocean and coastal climate change response strategies and processes, including consideration of tribal treaty rights and responsibilities.

Our decisions matter. And we aren’t waiting to act – all levels of government and society must play a role in taking bold ocean and climate action and increasing our resilience. We are leading by harnessing the power of regionally coordinated action to help defeat the climate crisis and to help our coastal communities and ocean resources endure for generations to come.



ENDORSED BY:

State of CONNECTICUT



State of HAWAI'I



State of MARYLAND



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