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## U.S. Ocean Climate Action Plan Comments by the Florida Ocean Alliance

### Background

The Florida Ocean Alliance (FOA) is pleased to respond to the request for information on the U.S. Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP) from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The Alliance represents a “community of practice” in Florida, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that is a diverse nonpartisan leadership partnership dedicated to positioning Florida as a global leader in responsible ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, education, and technology innovation. Our Board of Directors represents the private sector, including representatives from ocean-related industries in tourism, ports, shipping, cruising, recreational and commercial fishing, and recreational boating, as well as representatives from nonprofit research organizations, academia, the ocean research community, and public interest groups. In June of 2020, the Alliance completed a Strategic Plan for Florida’s Oceans and Coasts that was funded by the Florida Legislature. This Plan ([2020 Strategic Plan “Securing Florida’s Blue Economy: A Strategic Plan for Florida’s Oceans and Coasts”](#)) highlighted four key issues: (1) the Blue Economy, (2) Ocean and coastal resilience, (3) Human and natural infrastructure, and (4) Implementation, outreach and financing.

### Critical Actions

Florida is an ocean state with lengthy and multiple coastlines and an invaluable marine environment accessible to all residents. It should be viewed as one state that borders both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts, as well as encompassing the Everglades. Therefore, the development of a national Ocean Climate Action Plan is of high importance to our state. Resilience is critical here -- “ground 0” -- as we deal with increasingly stronger storms and hurricanes, as well as warming oceans and accelerated sea level rise along our coasts. Florida relies on the Blue Economy



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for economic resilience, stability and for healthy oceans and coasts for our communities. We direct you to the Strategic Plan for specific actions that are a priority for Florida and urge the use of the most current science and technology available for developing OCAP. The Alliance industry members use the ocean's resources as the basis for their companies' livelihood, while our academic and private research and NGO members conduct research on these same resources to address ocean and coastal issues while working to protect those same resources and help solve problems that climate change has raised.

#### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

As a diverse organization of interconnected sectors and stakeholders, FOA believes it is critical to involve experts from broad sectors in the policy initiation process. We have developed trusted relationships with governmental agencies over the past two decades and remain committed to providing this important connection to the communities that we represent and serve. With this in mind, the Florida Ocean Alliance stands ready to help OSTP connect with communities and stakeholders on strategic goals or other matters related to OCAP and other Presidential initiatives. Alliance members are specifically engaged in projects authorized by the Infrastructure Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, and its members have a significant investment in ocean and coastal issues and congressional programs. Florida has a history of natural resource protection of mangroves and seagrass and the natural sequestration of carbon, which we hope to continue as we deal with climate change in our state. We would be honored to work with OSTP and its team in assisting development of the OCAP and in providing input from the diverse groups we represent.