

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2010

Administrator Lisa Jackson
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Constitution Ave., NW.
Washington, DC 20460.

Dear Administrator Jackson,

As members of Congress who are committed to attaining fishable and swimmable waters throughout the United States, we are writing to urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address the threat of ocean acidification through guidance issued under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. We recommend that you take this opportunity to provide leadership aimed at investigating the potential effects of ocean acidification on marine ecosystems.

Ocean acidification poses grave threats to the world's marine wildlife and to the fisheries and marine resources upon which we depend. Changes in seawater chemistry have the potential to impair the ability of marine life—from plankton and corals to shellfish and mollusks—to build the protective shells they need to survive. Reductions in primary productivity, the base of most marine food chains, could disrupt commercial fishing industries worldwide with broad dietary and economic consequences. Continued research and observations are needed to better understand the chemical processes involved and to better predict how ocean ecosystems might respond to acidification.

When enacting the Clean Water Act in 1972, Congress stated that its goal was to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. These waters provide recreational and commercial opportunities for our friends, families and communities by providing habitat for a wide variety of fish, wildlife and plants. As just one measure of these opportunities, commercial and recreational fishing generates approximately \$185 billion in sales for the U.S. economy and supports more than two million jobs. These jobs depend on healthy ecosystems.

In March 2010, the EPA published a notice soliciting comments on how to address ocean acidification under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Specifically, the EPA is considering how states and territories can identify and monitor ocean waters that are threatened or impaired by acidification. Section 303(d) requires that states identify impaired waters and develop approaches to limiting the pollution causing the water quality problem. The EPA can play an important role by providing guidance and leadership to address the threat of acidification.

EPA guidance under the Clean Water Act would fulfill an important need by providing a framework for national and state coordination to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and address the impacts of ocean acidification. Guidance from the EPA also could assist states and territories in assessing and monitoring their coastal waters and implementing measures that will mitigate water quality degradation from acidification. Finally, approaches under the Clean Water Act based on the best available science can complement other local, state, territorial and federal policies to address ocean acidification.


A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences, confirmed that there is growing evidence that ocean acidification is changing faster than it has in hundreds of thousands of years and that oceans will continue to become more acidic unless carbon dioxide emissions are substantially curbed. To address this potential environmental crisis, states and territories need guidance for implementing measures to protect their ocean and coastal resources from the immediate impact of rising ocean acidity.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership regarding this important issue. We look forward to working with you to address this tremendous challenge.


Sincerely,


LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress


SAM FARR
Member of Congress


JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress

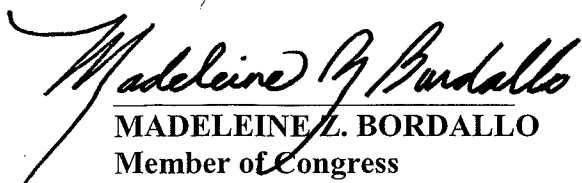

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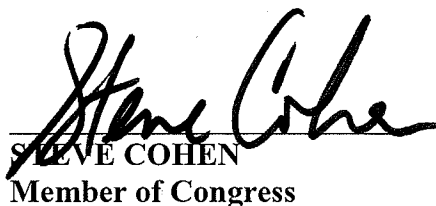

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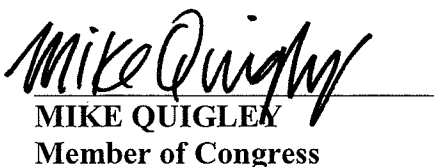

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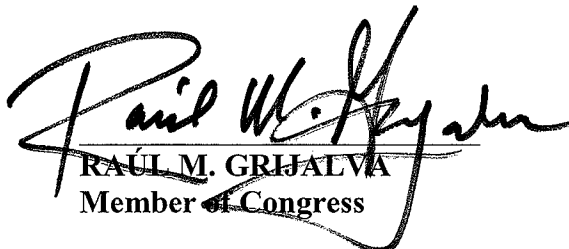

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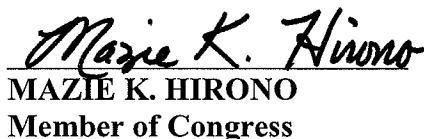

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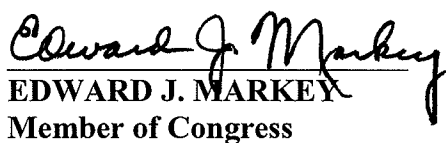

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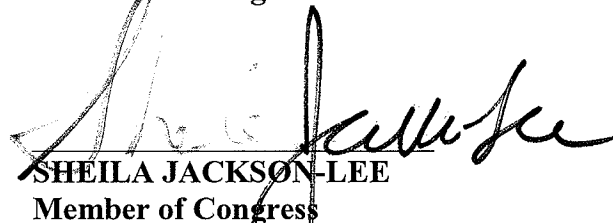

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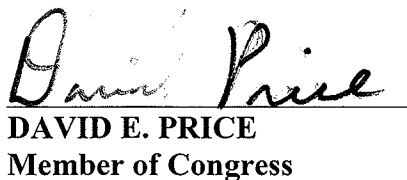

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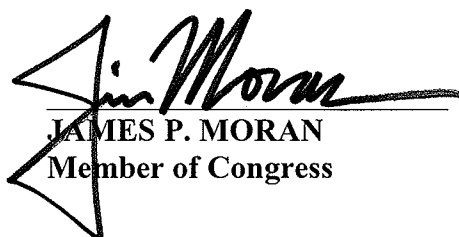

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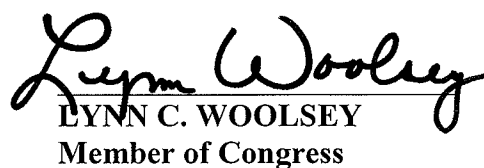

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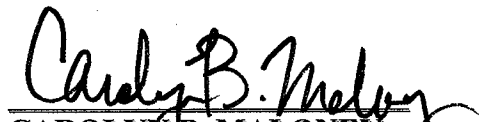
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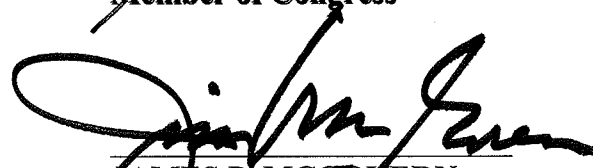
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