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New Ocean Agenda Critical to U.S. Future

Report Calls on Administration and Congress to Focus on Critical Ocean Policy Priorities

June 19, 2013 (Washington, D.C.) – The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative today called on President Obama and Congress to improve the management of our ocean resources. In a new report, "[Charting the Course: Securing the Future of America's Oceans](#)," the Joint Initiative highlights the increased urgency for proactive ocean management following Hurricane Sandy, which caused more than \$50 billion in damages. Nearly a decade ago, members of the Joint Initiative along with many in the ocean community, warned of the terrible effects of severe weather on our coastal communities unless natural defenses such as dunes and wetlands were fortified. Few of these recommendations were implemented and Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy followed; resulting in devastating human and economic losses. With "Charting the Course," the Joint Initiative outlines a clear path to protecting our nation's ocean and coastal resources and ensuring that they continue to fuel economic growth.

"Over the past year our nation has witnessed the devastating effects on our oceans and coastal communities from extreme weather events like Superstorm Sandy, rising sea levels and ocean acidification, and the loss of critical habitat that robs us of hardworking jobs," said the Honorable William Ruckelshaus, co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. "The U.S. must refocus on improving natural and manmade storm defenses, boosting opportunities for renewable energy production in our oceans, and supporting state and regional priorities for ocean use and protection. Our oceans are a wealth of natural and economic resources and we must manage them better."

"The U.S. controls the largest exclusive economic zone in the world," observed the Honorable Norman Mineta, co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. "To fully realize the benefits of fisheries, tourism, minerals, shipping and transportation, and hundreds of other ocean-industries, we must do everything in our power to keep our oceans healthy and our ecosystems productive. Our oceans do not align with any political ideology and we must come together to create policies based on the latest scientific data to understand what is best for the oceans and, as such, best for our ocean economy."

The latest report from the bipartisan Joint Initiative recommends actions for the Administration and Congress that prioritize areas where short-term progress can be readily achieved. If implemented, these measures will strengthen ocean-dependent economies, protect coastal communities and provide new opportunities for growth in thriving oceans. The report highlights four major recommendations and provides details on how to implement them:

- Enhance the resiliency of coastal communities and ocean ecosystems to dramatic changes underway in our oceans and on our coasts;
- Promote ocean renewable energy development and reinvest in our oceans;

- Support state and regional ocean and coastal priorities; and
- Improve Arctic research and management.

Through this report, the Joint Initiative also urges that the Administration and Congress build off of the blueprint set by the National Ocean Policy and make oceans a priority. Acting to restore wetlands, dunes and other natural protections along our coasts would reduce the impacts of storms, tsunamis, and rising sea levels; support responsible renewable energy projects; foster state and regional collaboration; and leverage economic opportunities in the Arctic and safeguard our national security interests without endangering this sensitive ecosystem will significantly impact the world's climate and ocean health.

To read the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative's report, please visit www.jointoceancommission.org and follow us on Twitter @JointOceanCI.

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The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission. The primary goal of the Joint Initiative is to accelerate the pace of change that results in meaningful ocean policy reform.