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Joint Initiative Hosts Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable in Alaska

April 27, 2015 (Fairbanks, AK)—This week, the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (JOCI) is traveling to Fairbanks and Barrow, Alaska for the second installment of the Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable, the first of four regional roundtables hosted by JOCI. To engage diverse perspectives and generate conversation around Arctic ocean and coastal policy reform at the federal, regional, state and local levels, JOCI hosted a discussion in Washington, DC last year and is now traveling to Alaska to continue the dialogue.

“The Arctic region, vital to our national interests, economy, and security, is facing unprecedented changes, challenges, and opportunities,” stated Bill Ruckelshaus, Co-Chair of JOCI’s Leadership Council. “The ability for increased development in the Arctic raises questions about how to proceed responsibly to ensure the health and sustainability of these ocean and coastal areas, while also improving Arctic communities and the lives of the people who live there. This is why the Joint Initiative’s trip to Alaska is so important and so timely.”

JOCI is holding this week’s roundtables in Fairbanks and Barrow in collaboration with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Institute of the North. Through these discussions, JOCI hopes to gain a better understanding of Alaskan perspectives on the Arctic including critical challenges facing the region, opportunities for progress, and appropriate federal activities and potential policy reforms. These discussions in Alaska will build on the December 2014 discussion in Washington, DC where participants representing ocean-related industries, science and research, national security, conservation, native communities, and federal and state government discussed issues related to how to support the United States as it assumes chairmanship of the Arctic Council, environment and climate change, commercial activities and the related infrastructure needs, and safety and security.

Following the meetings in Fairbanks and Barrow, the Joint Initiative will leverage its extensive network to amplify messages about why the Arctic matters to our nation’s leaders and elevate key policy and action priorities shared by diverse stakeholders.

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.