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## Joint Initiative Opposes Cuts that Undermine Coastal Communities and Economies

May 23, 2017 (Washington, DC) – Today, the Trump Administration released its official budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2018. The President’s budget includes deep cuts to critical ocean and coastal programs at NOAA, EPA, NSF, NASA, and within the Department of the Interior. The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (Joint Initiative) opposes proposed cuts to programs that are essential to the economic productivity and health of America’s oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

The Joint Initiative recently submitted [testimony](#) to Congressional appropriations subcommittees calling for full funding for NOAA, NASA, and the NSF. The testimony is derived from a new report, [Ocean Action Agenda: Supporting Regional Ocean Economies and Ecosystems](#), and from conversations with hundreds of industry, military, nonprofit, and tribal leaders, as well as local, state, and federal government officials representing America’s coasts. “Across the country, coastal communities are experiencing changing ocean conditions that are affecting their economies and way of life,” said Norman Y. Mineta, Co-Chair of the Joint Initiative and former Secretary of Commerce and Transportation. “Strong federal programs are needed now more than ever to partner with state, local, and private sector efforts to properly manage ocean resources and grow the ocean economy; these cuts are unwarranted and counterproductive.”

Nationwide, extreme weather events like Superstorm Sandy, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and the loss of critical habitat, among other emerging ocean threats, underscore the urgent need for investment in ocean and coastal programs. Yet, the President’s Budget significantly reduces funding for critical programs across federal agencies. These agencies have mandates to protect and serve communities and manage ocean resources, essential activities that are grossly undermined by this budget. “Much of the funding allocated to federal agencies ultimately ends up in the hands of state and local governments,” said Christine Todd Whitman, Co-Chair of the Joint Initiative and former Governor of New Jersey and EPA Administrator. “Sudden reductions in support for state and local initiatives leave coastal communities without the resources to protect their citizens and grow their economies.”

The President’s Budget reduces NOAA’s budget by approximately 16 percent, which would be the largest single-year cut to NOAA in recent memory. In addition, the Budget would eliminate over \$250 million in NOAA grants and programs, which will have significant negative consequences for coastal communities and ocean stakeholders. Wholesale eliminations and stark reductions in coastal and marine programs will impact every coastal state’s ability to provide services to coastal communities and ensure they remain engines of economic growth in a rapidly changing world. “NOAA’s services are fundamental to our economy,” said Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, U.S. Navy (Retired), member of the Joint Initiative Leadership Council and NOAA Administrator under President George W. Bush. “Between weather forecasts, fisheries management, ocean and coastal

management, and navigational charting activities, NOAA's programs directly support 30 to 50 percent of the economy."

Beyond NOAA, the President's Budget proposes significant cuts to scientific programs across the federal government. These cuts threaten to disrupt our ability to understand the dynamic interactions between our planet's marine, terrestrial, and atmospheric systems. These interactions have significant impacts on American communities, our economy, and ecosystem health and productivity. "Federal investments in science deepen our understanding of our surroundings and lead to better decision making," said Jane Lubchenco, member of the Joint Initiative Leadership Council and NOAA Administrator under President Barack Obama. "Federal funding has traditionally provided significant economic, social, and national security benefits at a relatively modest cost and cemented our position as a global leader in science and innovation."

America's oceans and Great Lakes are the lifeblood of communities from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico. They provide jobs, food, health, and recreation for millions of Americans. Unfortunately, the President's Budget threatens our ability to manage our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes to the benefit of all Americans. The Joint Initiative stands ready to assist the Administration and Congressional leaders as they fulfill their responsibility to strengthen our ocean-dependent economy, ensure responsible stewardship of ocean resources, protect vulnerable coastal communities, and provide opportunities for growth.

*The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative brings together all sectors of the ocean community to catalyze action and monitor progress toward meaningful ocean policy reform. Meridian Institute serves as the secretariat for the Joint Initiative.*