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Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Awards Marc J. Hershman Excellence in Mentoring Award

*Bipartisan Commission Recognizes Dr. Peter August for Instilling a Passion for Oceans
in Students and Young Professionals*

July 18, 2011 (Washington, D.C.) – The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative announces Dr. Peter August as the recipient of the 2011 Marc J. Hershman Excellence in Mentoring Award. Dr. August exemplifies the legacy of Professor Hershman by educating, training and inspiring students and young professionals to pursue careers in ocean and coastal science, policy and management. Joint Initiative Leadership Council Co-Chair, the Honorable Norman Mineta, and Leadership Council member, the Honorable John Podesta, presented the award on July 18 at the Coastal Zone 2011 conference in Chicago, Illinois.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a national bipartisan organization working toward ocean policy reform, established the award in memory of Professor Marc J. Hershman, who was a true leader in the field of ocean and coastal policy for more than 30 years, and served as a commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. Although widely respected for his work in the ocean and coastal management arena, a prominent highlight of Professor Hershman's legacy remains his great devotion to mentoring and inspiring young people. His dedication and enthusiasm for mentoring students, as well as his continued facilitation of their professional development in their early careers, has helped to cultivate the next generation of ocean and coastal managers and scientists.

The Joint Initiative applauds Dr. Peter August as the 2011 recipient of the Marc J. Hershman Excellence in Mentoring Award. Dr. August is a Professor of Natural Resources in the Department of Natural Resources Science at the University of Rhode Island (URI). Until recently, Dr. August served as the director of the Coastal Institute at URI. As Director, he was responsible for developing programs and activities that assisted in the creation of solutions to environmental problems in coastal ecosystems. Dr. August was the Principal Investigator of the Coastal Institute Integrative Graduate Education Research Traineeship (IGERT) Program, or CIIP. Dr. August's mentoring was most evident through his leadership of CIIP, which attracted 25 Ph.D. students from oceanography, economics, business, biology and fisheries. CIIP provided an integrated, multidisciplinary Ph.D. curriculum to enrich the education of students who show potential for leadership in solving environmental problems in coastal ecosystems.

Dr. August was nominated for the award by a fellow faculty member at URI and received 20 outstanding letters of support from current and past students and professional colleagues. A former student noted that Dr. August creates an environment where students can learn, where it was safe to make mistakes and where they can become strong critical thinkers. He extends his talent to each of the students, providing enormous value to their education and builds a sense of dignity, excellence and peer support. As a fellow faculty member remarked, “Dr. August has a passion for coastal science coupled with a wicked sense of humor. He uses both to motivate students and one cannot help but find his attitude infectious.” Dr. August is admired not only by his students but also by his professional colleagues, many of whom credit him as a mentor, teacher, advisor and all-around inspiration. As one colleague wrote, “Although he normally deflects all credit onto others, Dr. August has made a monumental and positive difference for ocean policy and coastal management in this part of the world.”

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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.