

# **International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification**

## ***A Global Call to Action***

### **I. The Threat of Ocean Acidification**

*We, the endorsing parties to this Call to Action hereby agree as follows:*

- A. Emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere are increasing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> being absorbed by the world's oceans. Increasing CO<sub>2</sub> levels have altered the basic chemical composition of our oceans causing them to become more acidified.
- B. Increasing acidification combined with other climate-change driven changes in ocean conditions, including warmer temperatures and reduced oxygen levels, are already causing unprecedented damage to ocean and marine ecosystems.
- C. Acidification adversely impacts commercial, recreational, subsistence, and ceremonial shellfish harvest and other seafood industries around the world, which sustain jobs, support coastal economies and feed billions of people. Species of crab, lobsters, oysters, clams, mussels, squid and species of plankton that are critically important food chain species for fish, marine mammals and other ocean life are adversely impacted.
- D. If CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are not reduced quickly and dramatically, acidification will worsen and further damage ocean species, marine ecosystems, and coastal economies.
- E. Several existing international networks coordinate science, research and monitoring efforts on ocean acidification regionally and around the world. Increased global participation in these science and monitoring networks are essential to understand and prepare for the threat posed to our oceans.
- F. In 2015, 195 countries signed the historic Climate Agreement in Paris committing to meaningful and timely action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The world's nations must succeed in reducing emissions in order to secure the health of the oceans, and thereby protect the natural systems on which the planet depends.

### **II. Global Call to Action**

- A. We the endorsing parties commit our strong support for actions to reduce emissions and mitigate future changes to the ocean, and we call for ambitious international action to combat ocean acidification and other climate-related changes in ocean conditions. For this purpose, we hereby establish the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (Alliance).
- B. The mission of the Alliance is to identify, coordinate and expand meaningful and timely actions to combat ocean acidification and limit other climate change-driven changes to the world's oceans.

C. The Alliance will advance the five goals listed below in order to identify, coordinate and expand actions to combat ocean acidification. Through the Alliance, members will work collectively and individually to secure, pursue and advocate for these actions.

1. **Advance scientific understanding of ocean acidification:** Improve the understanding of ocean acidification globally and within the members' regions, including support for developing and implementing adequate monitoring networks, and prioritized research and monitoring within their region.

The Alliance is committed to working with and supporting existing global networks dedicated to science and monitoring of ocean acidification and to share information and best practices that will benefit the global community.

2. **Take meaningful actions to reduce causes of acidification:** Implement actions that will prevent or slow acidification through reducing atmospheric emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, reducing additions of land-based pollutants, including nutrients that contribute to acidification, and other measures that will mitigate the causes of acidification.
3. **Protect the environment and coastal communities from impacts of acidification and a changing ocean:** Implement actions to assist ocean-dependent communities and industries to adapt to changing ocean chemistry, and actions that increase the resilience of regional marine ecosystems and the ability to withstand increasing acidity in marine waters.
4. **Expand public awareness and understanding of acidification:** Engage policy makers, scientists and the public about the damage resulting from, and the growing threat posed by, ocean acidification, as well as local actions that may be taken to mitigate ocean acidification. The Alliance will seek to participate in, and host or convene discussions where appropriate at, international events focused on climate change action and the impact of carbon emissions on ocean health.
5. **Build sustained international support for tackling this global problem:** Secure adequate funding, nationally and regionally, for ongoing, enhanced, and coordinated research and monitoring systems that will continue to inform governments, other organizations and the public across the world about the increasing impacts to marine resources and ecosystems. Significantly increase investment in actions to mitigate and adapt to these impacts.

D. The Alliance invites countries, states and provinces, counties and cities, Tribes and First Nations, and governments that are concerned about the impacts of ocean acidification and are ready and able to highlight the issue of ocean acidification, both within their region and globally to join the Alliance. The Alliance further invites universities, non-governmental organizations, associations, businesses, and other parties to join and participate as affiliate members.

- E. Alliance members commit to supporting the work of the Alliance broadly and to taking meaningful actions within their jurisdiction as allowed by their existing capacity, by crafting their own jurisdictional action plans. Action plans should focus on advancing the five goals of the Alliance.
- F. Alliance members will be supported in their efforts through information exchange of the most recent and relevant science, best practices to mitigate and adapt, sharing examples of existing action plans, and through periodic convening of members at high-level international oceans and climate-related meetings.
- G. This declaration shall have no legal effect; impose no legally binding obligation enforceable in any court of law or other tribunal of any sort, nor create any funding expectation; nor shall signatories be responsible for actions of third parties or associates.
- H. Decisions on actions taken or supported by the Alliance shall be made by notice and consensus of the members, or where consensus is lacking, by a supermajority of the members. The Alliance may identify and appoint an administrative center to manage Alliance activities and resources. As needed, further procedures will be determined at future gatherings of the Alliance.

**Endorsed by the Founding Members of the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification on December 13, 2016, in San Diego, California.**