



Ocean-Climate Leaders Joint Statement on United States' Nationally Determined Contribution and Climate Commitment

For Immediate Release April 21, 2021

President Biden's Leaders Summit on Climate marks an important step forward in realizing the goals and targets set forth within the Paris Climate Agreement to avert the worst impacts of climate change. We know that the future health of our ocean, ecosystems and communities will be affected by our global greenhouse gas emissions, with a high emissions path posing the most significant risks for severe and large changes.

National, state, Tribal and municipal governments increasingly recognize the important relationship between climate and ocean change. The ocean has absorbed large amounts of carbon dioxide and excess heat from fossil fuel combustion, making our ocean warmer, more acidified, more stratified and oxygen depleted. From oyster die-offs and coral reef bleaching to marine heat waves and harmful algal blooms, coastal communities in the United States and around the world are feeling the effects on fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and marine ecosystems that are important for sustaining jobs, coastal economies and cultures, indigenous ways of life, and feeding people.

We applaud ambitious targets set forth in the United States' Nationally Determined Contribution and the many implementation pathways needed to achieve them. **Setting and achieving ambitious emission targets is the most important step in turning the tide of climate impacts on our ocean.** And we know the ocean and ocean-based sectors can play a role. As governments and communities around the world are working to address the health, social justice and economic crisis accelerated by the Covid-19 Pandemic, it's more important than ever that climate and ocean action are understood as a critical part of building immediate and long-term resiliency. We know we must take an inclusive, intersectoral, whole-of-government approach to global recovery and building back better.

Members of the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (Alliance) demonstrate the kinds of local actions, policy integration and regional cooperation that are mobilizing ambitious and urgent actions for reducing our emissions and helping communities and industries build resilience to climate-ocean change. As drivers of local and regional strategies, the undersigned members of the Alliance support the following actions that will help operationalize the climate-ocean nexus across the United States' climate commitments.

These actions should be carried out with meaningful consultation to Tribal sovereigns and indigenous peoples, including consideration of tribal treaty rights, responsibilities, diversity, equity, and inclusivity.



(1) Support and implement policies, plans and commitments that seek to **reduce anthropogenic carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions**. Dramatically reducing carbon dioxide emissions is the most important action to mitigate ocean acidification.

(2) Support and Implement **Build Back Better** federal legislation that will actively help regional and local entities implement and scale climate-ocean actions, including:

- **Increased mitigation and adaptation through natural and working lands, nature-based solutions, and blue carbon measures.** Natural and working lands including tidal and subtidal areas like wetlands, kelp and seagrass beds offer multiple benefits relevant to remediating climate change impacts to coastal communities and should be supported with financing mechanisms. We support funding for wetlands, watersheds, coastal and ocean restoration projects.
- **Upgraded and modernized wastewater and stormwater systems** that can help reduce local and land-based source contributions of pollution that further exacerbate coastal warming, acidification, and deoxygenation.

(3) Support legislation development like the **Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act**, the **Coastal Communities Ocean Acidification Act** and the **Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act**. These will provide an important foundation by supporting the science needed for informed decision-making and policies that advance solutions.

(4) **Encourage dynamic goals and targets** for ocean protection and connected lands, rivers, lakes, and wetlands that provide data and research on climate change impacts and support resiliency building strategies.

(5) **Commission local and regional vulnerability assessments** outlining the impacts of climate-ocean change to species, communities, and industries. This will help governments, communities and industries prioritize research and studies that will inform adaptive potential and improve local interventions to climate change impacts.

(6) **Invest in targeted, coordinated science and monitoring** that aids local governments and communities in understanding the regional trends and impacts of changing ocean conditions on our communities and ecosystems. This will help us answer our shared management questions about changing ocean conditions and inform actions that reduce impacts, improve resilience, and support adaptive management.

(7) Call for a continuation of the **UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue at COP26** and beyond. We must continue to bridge our work on addressing climate and ocean change to unlock the full range of solutions and actions our planet and people need.

We commend the leadership put forward by the Biden Administration and are committed to help achieve the aggressive climate mitigation targets and deploy solutions that will be needed to achieve sustainable and resilient coastal communities, resources, and economies.



Signatories

State of Hawai'i



Gullah Geechee Nation



Georgia Aquarium



State of Maryland



**Northwest Indian Fisheries
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Monterey Bay Aquarium



State of Oregon



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