

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President-elect Biden:

In furtherance of your commitment to create a more vibrant and powerful economy and millions of good-paying jobs, and as the country seeks to recover from the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the undersigned groups representing nearly every sector of the U.S. economy respectfully request your support for ensuring collaborative, transparent, and balanced multi-use ocean policies within the existing statutory framework that support economic and environmental goals and remove barriers to beneficial coordination.

The effectiveness of collaborative ocean policy efforts is highlighted by the success of state-established regional ocean partnerships throughout the country that have led the way in bringing together federal agencies, states, tribes, industry, NGOs, and the general public to engage and coordinate on ocean-related issues. Continued support for existing regional ocean partnerships as the primary mechanism for coordination among the public and private sectors and across regions on ocean-related matters is critical to ensuring a streamlined effort that fosters true collaboration and opportunities for successful ocean outcomes.

Additionally, we welcome your commitment to always listen to science and promote trust and transparency in government. Sound science, fact-based information, and transparency are essential to effective decision-making, including for ocean-related sectors that contribute trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy and support tens of millions of jobs.

In that regard, as to your pledge to take executive action to protect 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030, we urge the administration to take into account the conservation benefits provided under existing federal and state laws and initiatives and establish tools for effective engagement with the private sector, including through establishment of an advisory group that includes representation of the full range of potentially impacted industries to provide advice on and inform such an effort or any other ocean protection initiative not already inclusive of robust industry consultation mechanisms. Effective engagement with user groups about this proposal, which has raised concerns about the potential for adverse impacts on a variety of sectors, would help ensure decisions that are based on sound science, carefully considered, and balanced.

To further support science- and fact-based decision-making, we also encourage the administration to continue ongoing federal efforts to implement a national strategy for mapping, exploring, and characterizing the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and increase the efficiency of permitting for ocean exploration, mapping, and research activities, both of which are central to achieving better understanding of the ocean and the economic and environmental benefits that it can and does provide to the Nation.

In closing, we appreciate your consideration of the comments and recommendations herein and stand ready to engage your administration to achieve our mutual desires for greater economic prosperity and job creation, including through a vibrant Blue Economy.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Alaska Miners Association
Alaska Oil and Gas Association
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Alaska Support Industry Alliance
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association
Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
American Exploration & Mining Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Loggers Council
American Petroleum Institute
At-sea Processors Association
B Cubed Associates LLC (Powder Springs, GA)
California Fisheries and Seafood Institute
California Wetfish Producers Association
Catalina Offshore Products
Charter Boat Miss Mary (Mexico Beach, FL)
Destin Charter Boat Association
Destin Charters LLC
Destin FL Charter Boats
Directed Sustainable Fisheries, Inc.
Due South Adventures
Family Farm Alliance
FinSeeker Fishing Charters
Fishing Vessel Owners' Association
Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association
Forest Landowners Association
Global Energy Institute
Greg Abrams Seafood (FL)
Gulf Economic Survival Team
Independent Petroleum Association of America
International Association of Drilling Contractors
Intimidator Deep Sea Fishing Charters
LA 1 Coalition
Long Island Commercial Fishing Association
Louisiana Trade Consultants
Maine Lobster Dealers' Association
Mexico Beach Charters
Mexicobeach.bz Inc. (Mexico Beach, FL)
Midwater Trawlers Cooperative
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Association of Charterboat Operators
National Fisheries Institute
National Ocean Policy Coalition
National Onion Association
North Carolina Watermen United
Oregon Trawl Commission
Organized Fishermen of Florida
Pacific Seafood Processors Association

Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative
Panama City Boatmen Association
Recreational Fishing Alliance
Recreational Fishing Alliance - Forgotten Coast Chapter
Recreational Fishing Alliance - Oregon State Chapter
Resource Development Council for Alaska
San Diego Fishermen's Working Group
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council
Southern Offshore Fishermen's Association
Tarpon Dock Seafood (FL)
TGS
The American Waterways Operators
The Angler Advocate
Transportation Institute
United Catcher Boats
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Wahlbee LLC (Mexico Beach, FL)
West Coast Seafood Processors Association
Western Energy Alliance
Western Fishboat Owners Association