To: The National Research Council Committee on K-12 Science Education
Fr: Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Re: Comments on the Draft NRC Science Framework for Science Education

On behalf of our 95 member oceanographic and research institutions, Consortium for Ocean Leadership congratulates the National Research Council Committee on developing a draft framework for K-12 science education. We believe your efforts are vital to ensuring children are provided with a well-rounded education and to the development of our nation’s next generation of science leaders and innovators.

Furthermore, we would also like to endorse the comments submitted by the Board of Directors of the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA). We commend the issues addressed in NMEA’s comments and would like to reiterate a few of their points. First, although the term ‘Earth Sciences’ encompasses many planetary processes, we believe it is vital to specifically include the ocean system in the Earth and Space Science section. The ocean is the predominant physical feature on our planet, covering 72 percent of the Earth’s surface. By excluding the ocean, the framework is missing unique and specific scientific concepts critical for a comprehensive understanding of earth sciences beyond the terrestrial environment.

Secondly, we agree with NMEA that climate change education efforts should also include the role of the ocean in driving the Earth’s climate. The ocean’s role in the climate system is influential as it absorbs, retains, and transports vast amounts of the Earth’s heat, water, and carbon dioxide across the globe. Beyond driving the climate system, the ocean itself is being affected by a rapidly changing environment. Ocean Leadership believes the Framework should reflect the most current research by climatologists and oceanographers which shows the connection of the ocean to the climate system and the impact of climate change on both terrestrial and marine environments.

Once again, Ocean Leadership congratulates the National Research Council for reaching this milestone. We look forward to engaging with the education community to encourage the incorporation of the framework into K-12 education standards.

Best,

Melbourne G. Briscoe
Vice President and Director, Research & Education