October 7, 2009

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mrs. Murkowski:

On behalf of the 95 members of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, I am writing to express our strong support for Dr. Marcia McNutt as the science advisor to the Interior Secretary and Director of the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Ocean Leadership represents the nation’s leading public and private ocean research and education institutions, aquaria, and industry. Dr. McNutt’s accomplishments — including her leadership skills and experience — are well known to Ocean Leadership’s members. We are very pleased she has been nominated for this position. Dr. McNutt is a renowned researcher and scientist with over 30 years of experience in the geosciences, which includes three years working for USGS. Her managerial experiences, including her position as the President and CEO of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute for the past 12 years, will also be an invaluable asset for her position as Director of USGS.

In the face of the challenges to the nation and its resources — including the impacts accompanying climate change — Earth science programs in federal agencies need capable leadership to guide the development and implementation of adaptation, mitigation, and response strategies now more than ever. USGS plays a vital role combating these problems including providing climate and environmental information and predicting coastal and land vulnerabilities. Dr. McNutt’s extensive experience and expertise supporting collaborative, interdisciplinary science will help optimize and capitalize on the assets and tools being brought to bear on these issues by USGS. In the position of science advisor to the Secretary on the Department of Interior, Dr. McNutt will use her scientific background to ensure the proper application of science in management and policy decisions.
Our nation’s oceans, coasts, and land masses offer vast potential benefits and numerous and complex challenges. With Dr. McNutt’s leadership, the Department of Interior will have an expert capable and ready to make immediate progress toward addressing the environmental and climatic challenges facing this nation. We strongly encourage Senate confirmation of Dr. McNutt as the next director of the USGS.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert B. Gazdam
President and CEO
Consortium for Ocean Leadership