September 1, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and esteemed members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

On behalf of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL), which represents our nation’s leading ocean science, research, and technology organizations from academia, industry, and the larger nonprofit sector (to include philanthropy, associations, and aquariums), I am writing to indicate my strong support of the bipartisan Save Our Seas (SOS) 2.0 Act (H.R. 3969/S.1982) and urge the House to take up this important piece of legislation as soon as possible.

Building upon the successes of the widely popular Save Our Seas Act of 2018 enacted in October 2018, the SOS 2.0 Act would better equip our nation to tackle the marine debris problem domestically and globally. As a maritime nation, our national, homeland, energy, food, water, and economic securities, as well as our public health and safety, depend on a healthy ocean – which in turn depends on ocean science and technology – a concept I refer to as “ocean security.” However, marine plastic pollution poses a threat to our ocean security, one we must address with science-based policy and collaboration, as outlined by the SOS 2.0 Act.

This act would be the most comprehensive piece of marine debris legislation ever signed into law, helping fight the issue of marine plastic pollution on several fronts, by strengthening our nation’s capability to respond to marine debris, reinforcing our international leadership and cooperation on global marine debris issues, and improving our ability to prevent marine debris through innovative waste management methods. I applaud the bill’s commitment to finding scientific solutions to the issue of marine debris while also recognizing that the scale of the problem will require building strong partnerships across many sectors. In particular, I am impressed by the bill’s establishment of a “Genius Prize” to catalyze private sector engagement and innovation in finding solutions to the multifaceted challenge of marine debris.

Our ocean is one of our greatest resources, and the myriad way it supports our nation –at the coasts and beyond – are critical to the safe future of our nation. This bill will have a positive impact on our ocean security, and I encourage the House to act and advance this important legislation before the 116th Congress draws to a close.

Respectfully,

Jonathan W. White, RADM (Ret.), USN
President and CEO
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Consortium for Ocean Leadership Member Institutions
Alaska Ocean Observing System • Alaska SeaLife Center • Aquarium of the Pacific • ARCUS • ASV Global, LLC • Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences • Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences • Chevron USA • College of William & Mary • Consumer Energy Alliance • Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences • Dauphin Island Sea Lab • Duke University • Earth2Ocean • East Carolina University • Esri • Estuary & Ocean Science Center, San Francisco State University • Exocetus • FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute • Florida Institute of Oceanography • Harte Research Institute • Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute • IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society • Institute for Global Environmental Strategies • JASCO • Johns Hopkins University APL • L-3 MariPro, Inc. • Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory • Liquid Robotics, Inc. • Louisiana State University • Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium • MARACOOS • Marine Technology Society • Massachusetts Institute of Technology • MBARI • MIST Cluster program • Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute • Moore Foundation • Moss Landing Marine Laboratories • Mystic Aquarium • NERACOOS • New England Aquarium • NOIA • North Carolina State University • North Pacific Research Board • Nova Southeastern University • Old Dominion University • Oregon State University • Pennsylvania State University • Rutgers University • Saildrone • Savannah State University • Sea-Bird Scientific • Severn Marine Technologies, LLC • Shell • Skidaway Institute of Oceanography of UGA • Sonardyne, Inc. • South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium • Stanford University • Stony Brook University • SURA • Teledyne CARIS • Texas A&M University • The IOOS Association • U.S. Arctic Research Commission • U.S. Naval Postgraduate School • UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography • University of Alaska Fairbanks • University of California, Davis • University of California, Santa Barbara • University of California, Santa Cruz • University of Delaware • University of Florida • University of Hawaii • University of Maine • University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science • University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth • University of Miami • University of New Hampshire • University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill • University of North Carolina, Wilmington • University of Rhode Island • University of South Carolina • University of South Florida • University of Southern California • University of Southern Mississippi • University of Texas at Austin • University of Washington • University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee • Vulcan, Inc. • Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution