May 17, 2021

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congresswoman Bonamici:

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 aquariums, philanthropy, and associations), I am writing to express support for the Coastal and Ocean Acidification Stressors and Threats (COAST) Research Act of 2021 (H.R. 1447). COL applauds the COAST Research Act in its mission to strengthen existing ocean acidification initiatives and to introduce new strategies to better understand and manage this environmental stressor.

Ocean acidification, which occurs as the ocean absorbs higher concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide, threatens the health of the entire ocean. As corals, shellfish, and many types of plankton struggle to create and maintain their shells or exoskeletons in more acidic waters, ocean food webs are disrupted. This, in turn, threatens the crucial balance in many ecosystems, as well as our own security and prosperity, jeopardizing the stability of those whose livelihoods depend on a healthy ocean. Like many environmental challenges of our time, vulnerable communities who rely on shellfish and healthy coastal ecosystems for food, employment, and commerce with few alternatives will feel the negative impacts of ocean acidification most acutely. Combatting the causes and mitigating the effects of ocean acidification requires sustained congressional support and interagency collaboration, as well as engagement by stakeholders in the private sector, academia, philanthropy, and beyond. I strongly commend the COAST Research Act’s commitment to advancing ocean acidification research and monitoring efforts, as well as promoting cooperation among stakeholder groups.

I offer my sincere thanks to you, Congresswoman Bonamici, for your efforts to help us better understand this urgent threat and to improve overall ocean health by strengthening federal investments in the research and increasing monitoring of changing ocean conditions. Our lives and our future may well depend on it.

Respectfully,

Jonathan W. White, RADM (Ret.), USN
President and CEO
Consortium for Ocean Leadership