March 1, 2019

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 aquariums, I am writing to express support for the Coastal and Ocean Acidification Stressors and Threats (COAST) Research Act (H.R. 6267). America relies on our ocean and coastal communities for our basic individual needs as well as our overall security and prosperity. Keeping these environments, and therefore their communities, safe from the myriad threats associated with ocean acidification is paramount to our ocean security. COL applauds the COAST Research Act in its mission to strengthen existing ocean acidification initiatives and 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 food security, and jeopardizes the stability of those whose livelihoods depend on a healthy ocean. Combatting the causes and mitigating the effects of ocean acidification requires sustained congressional support and interagency collaboration, as well as engagement from stakeholders in the private sector and academia. 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, along with Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and Congressmen Don Young and Bill Posey, for your bipartisan efforts to help us better understand ocean acidification and 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