Friends of NOAA Coalition

September 11, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Office 221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Office 230
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

The undersigned members of the ocean and coastal research, education, and conservation community would like to thank you for your strong support of ocean and coastal science and conservation in the U.S. Senate. We strongly support the important ocean and coastal related bills included in S. 3297 – Hydrographic Services Improvement Act, Ocean Exploration and NOAA Undersea Research Program Act, Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act, Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act, and National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act. We collectively urge the Senate to remain diligent in its efforts to seek passage of these much needed improvements in ocean policy at the earliest available opportunity.

These bills will increase our understanding of coastal, ocean and Great Lake ecosystems and promote both conservation and sustainable use. All of the bills have passed the House of Representatives and have been reported out of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee with bipartisan support.

With more than 50 percent of the U.S. population living in coastal counties, these regions are vital contributors to our economy, quality of life and national security. With an ever-changing climate, increasing natural hazards, and declining fisheries, we need the tools to protect and manage our ocean assets and better understand how ocean and coastal ecosystems respond to natural and human-related hazards.

We hope you will demonstrate your continued commitment to strengthening our Nation’s understanding and conservation of the oceans and coasts through Senate consideration of these measures.

Sincerely,

National Association of Marine Laboratories
Sea Grant Association
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing
Reinsurance Association of America
Campaign for Environmental Literacy

League of Conservation Voters
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Coastal States Organization
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
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Maryland Sea Grant
University of Southern Mississippi
MK & CO
University of Washington
Ocean Initiative, Natural Resources Defense Council
Oceana
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences,
Stony Brook University
North Carolina Sea Grant Program
Florida Sea Grant College Program
USC Sea Grant
New York Sea Grant
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Georgia
Savannah State University
Delaware Sea Grant
Baruch Institute, University of South Carolina
Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
New Hampshire Sea Grant
University of New Hampshire Marine Program
Annis Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University, Michigan
Alaska SeaLife Center
Center for Coastal Studies, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas
Maine Sea Grant
Pennsylvania Sea Grant
National Institute for Undersea Science and Technology University of Mississippi
University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program
Romberg Tiburon Center, San Francisco State University
Michigan Sea Grant
Louisiana Sea Grant
Rhode Island Sea Grant
Woods Hole Sea Grant
Center for Marine and Coastal Sciences, California Polytechnic State University
University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute and Water Resources Institute
South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
California Sea Grant
Minnesota Sea Grant
American Association of Port Authorities
University of North Carolina Institute of Marine Sciences
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
Ohio Sea Grant College Program
F. T. Stone Laboratory

Center for Lake Erie Area Research
Seahorse Key Marine Laboratory, University of Florida
Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, University of Florida
Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Alabama
Conrad Blucher Institute for Surveying and Science, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Shoals Marine Laboratory, Cornell University
California Sea Grant
UCLA Institute of the Environment
Battelle
Alliance for Earth Observations
Texas Sea Grant
Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
Raytheon Company
Great Lakes Commission
West Marine
Marine Programs, University of Connecticut
Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, Florida
Southeast Environmental Research Center, Florida International University
Large Lakes Observatory, University of Minnesota Duluth
University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Marine Laboratory
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium
Great Lakes WATER Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
The University of Texas Marine Science Institute
MIT Sea Grant College Program
Virginia Sea Grant Program
Connecticut Sea Grant Program
Old Woman Creek NERR Advisory Council
WeatherBank, Inc.
Commercial Weather Services Association
Duke University Marine Laboratory
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Texas A&M University at Galveston
Texas Institute of Oceanography
Institute for Exploration
Restore America's Estuaries
University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program
Perry Institute for Marine Science
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography
University of Connecticut Marine Program