November 18, 2009

Dear Chairpersons and Ranking Members,

We commend your action in focusing the attention of the Senate on the critical issue of climate change. Passage of strong climate change legislation will establish the United States of America as a global leader in addressing this great threat, and is the constructive and positive direction that is required to save our blue planet. Your leadership and commitment is precisely what is needed to improve the nation’s and world’s response to climate change.

As environmental stakeholders and scientists, we write to highlight an aspect of addressing climate change that has been overlooked in the current versions of climate change legislation, namely, the role that coastal and ocean ecosystems play as natural carbon sinks. We feel it is important to recognize their potential in mitigating the effects of climate change.

The Earth’s oceans are critically important to the global carbon cycle. Our oceans, and the marine ecosystems they support, are natural carbon sinks. In fact, healthy ocean ecosystems represent the largest active carbon sink on Earth. Scientists recognize that some coastal and marine ecosystems, including tidal marshlands, mangrove ecosystems and seagrass meadows, play a natural role in absorbing carbon from the atmosphere. The continuing degradation of our oceans and loss of these ecosystems decreases the natural capacity of our oceans to perform these functions. Healthy natural ocean ecosystems are also critical to the livelihoods and food security of millions, and to the conservation of global biodiversity.

We ask Congress to consider following recommendations:

- Support the option for natural ocean carbon solutions in climate change legislation.
- Support marine science research that further explores natural ocean carbon solutions.

Thank you for considering our views, and for your continued commitment to addressing the threat of climate change.

Sincerely,

Signed by the following sixty-six conservation groups and stakeholders, and one hundred and fifty-eight marine scientists and professionals, together from twenty-eight states and territories and thirty-three countries (Blue Climate Coalition):
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Blue Climate Coalition Letter

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Blue Climate Coalition Letter
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(Affiliations are for identification only, and do not imply endorsement by the signers' institutions)

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(Ninety-six signatories from twenty-eight states and territories)

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Blue Climate Coalition Letter

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Blue Climate Coalition Letter