

BLUE CLIMATE COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS ON  
THE BLUE ECONOMY

November 19, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you work to stabilize and strengthen the economy, please consider that a healthy environment can play a central role in job creation and a strong economic future, as well as addressing greenhouse gas pollution and global climate change.

As coastal and marine stakeholders, representing a wide range of interests, we write to provide our support and recommendations for economic recovery and the mitigation of greenhouse gas pollution, through job creation projects related to the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems, illustrated as follows:

**Blue Works** – Healthy coasts and oceans are vital to the economy of the United States. The majority of the nation’s population lives in coastal states (70%) and the majority of the gross domestic product comes from coastal states (82% in 2008)<sup>1</sup>.

Healthy coastal and marine ecosystems represent critical economic infrastructure – they are vital to coastal economies through lucrative tourism and commercial and recreational fisheries. For example, Florida’s recreational saltwater fishery, dependent on healthy seagrass meadows and mangrove forests, has an economic impact of \$5.4 billion and supports over 54,000 jobs<sup>2</sup>.

Coastal and marine conservation and restoration projects can create new jobs, provide economic stimulus and increase revenues to states and local communities. Many “shovel ready” projects are awaiting implementation. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) received \$167 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for coastal restoration projects around the country from a pool of proposals totaling more than \$3 billion in requests.

**Blue Carbon** – Healthy coasts and oceans are also critically important to climate change and the global carbon cycle. When healthy, certain coastal and marine ecosystems such as seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, and saltwater marshlands absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide and thereby naturally help mitigate the threat of climate change<sup>3,4</sup>. These “blue carbon” ecosystems are extremely effective at storing carbon – mangroves and coastal wetlands store 50 times more carbon than tropical forests by area.

Sadly, the loss of coastal ecosystems is occurring at an alarming rate – 59,000 acres of coastal wetlands are lost each year in the Eastern United States<sup>5</sup>. The continued degradation of these ecosystems decreases the ocean’s existing carbon stock and its capacity to mitigate climate change. It also threatens essential fish habitat, marine biodiversity, and related sectors of the economy.

**Recommendations** – We respectfully ask you to consider the following actions:

- 1) Include the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems in your plan for economic recovery, and a central strategy in policy for climate change mitigation. Options include:
  - a. Increase support for the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems that help store atmospheric carbon. Suitable projects will create good jobs and support and stimulate local economies while also mitigating climate change. They will also encourage community-based volunteerism and represent a significant investment in our future;
  - b. Support the research and development of natural marine ecosystem solutions to climate change, and related technologies, through priority setting at appropriate science funding bodies;
  - c. Incorporate coastal and marine carbon management into your National Ocean Policy and marine spatial planning policy. Please consider issuing a directive that facilitates cross-cutting interagency cooperation and the creation of guidelines for managing and accounting for these blue carbon sinks;
  - d. Include coastal and marine carbon sinks in national greenhouse gas accounting;
  - e. Incorporate blue carbon solutions into U.S. international development assistance; and
- 2) Support the United States in advancing the inclusion coastal and marine ecosystem carbon in international climate change negotiation texts.

Please note that eleven U.S. Senators have recently endorsed the blue carbon concept by including appropriate language under allowable climate mitigation (or offset) projects in the Clean Energy Partnerships Act of 2009 and American Power Act (discussion draft)<sup>6</sup>.

We offer you our support in advancing these policy options. Thank you for considering our views and for your continued commitment to productive and healthy oceans.

Sincerely,

Signed by the following seventy-four marine stakeholders and conservation groups, together from twenty-one U.S. states and territories and seventeen countries (Blue Climate Coalition):

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**Domestic** - Fifty-four signatories from twenty-one states and territories:

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**Blue Climate Solutions**

Steven J. Lutz, Executive Director, Founder, Blue Climate Coalition, Miami, FL



**The Ocean Foundation**

Mark J. Spalding, Ph.D., President, Washington, DC



**Mangrove Action Project**

Alfredo Quarto, Executive Director, Port Angeles, WA

*Alfredo Quarto*



**Pew Environment Group - Campaign for Healthy Oceans**

Chris Mann, Director, Washington, DC

*Chris Mann*



**Sierra Club**

Bruce Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director, San Francisco, CA



**Seagrass Recovery**

Jeff Beggins, President & CEO, Indian Rocks Beach, FL



**Restore America's Estuaries**

Jeff Benoit, President, Arlington, VA

*Jeff Benoit*



**350.org**

Bill McKibben, Co-founder & Global Organizer, Ripton, VT

*Bill McKibben*



**Greenpeace USA**

Phil Kline, Senior Oceans Campaigner, Washington, DC

*Phil Kline*



**The Blue Carbon Project**

John Bruno, Ph.D., Director, Assistant Professor, Department of Marine Sciences, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

*John Bruno*



**Surfrider Foundation**

Chad Nelsen, Environmental Director, San Clemente, CA

*Chad Nelsen*



**American Littoral Society**

Tim Dillingham, Executive Director, Highlands, NJ

*Tim Dillingham*



**Ocean Conservation Research**

Michael Stocker, Executive Director, Forest Knolls, CA

*Michael Stocker*



**American Fisheries Society (AFS)**

Gus Rassam, Ph.D., Executive Director, Bethesda, MD

*Gus Rassam*



**Alliance for Earth Observations**

Nancy S.A. Colleton, Executive Director & Co-Founder, Arlington, VA

*Nancy Colleton*



**EarthEcho International**

Philippe Cousteau, Jr., Co-founder & CEO, Washington, DC

*Philippe Cousteau, Jr.*



**NAUI Worldwide**

Jed Livingstone, Vice President, Tampa, FL

*Jed Livingstone*



**Forest Trends**

Mr. Michael Jenkins, President & CEO, Washington, DC

*Michael Jenkins*



**Blue Ocean Institute**

Carl Safina, Ph.D., President, East Norwich, NY

*Carl Safina*



**Oceanic Defense - Florida**

Samantha Whitcraft, Director, Conservation Biology & Research,  
Miami, FL *Activation Through Education*

*Samantha Whitcraft*



**Fauna & Flora International**

Katie Frohardt, Executive Director, Washington, DC

*Katie Frohardt*



**Trees, Water & People**

Stuart Conway, International Director, Fort Collins, CO

*Stuart Conway*



**Center for Rural Empowerment and the Environment**

Mike Skuja, Executive Director & Founder, Washington, DC

*Mike Skuja*



**Urban Paradise Guild**

Sam Van Leer, Executive Director, Miami, FL

*Sam Van Leer*



**CORALations**

Mary Ann Lucking, Director, Culebra, PR

*Mary Ann Lucking*



**Environment Florida**

Sarah Bucci, Federal Field Associate, Miami Beach, FL

*Sarah Bucci*



**Repower America - Florida**

Lance Orchid, Florida State Director, St Petersburg, FL

*Lance Orchid*



**The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL)**

Rick MacPherson, Interim Executive Director and Conservation Programs Director, San Francisco, CA

*Rick MacPherson*



**Earth2Ocean Inc.**

Ellen Prager, Ph.D., President, Miami, FL

*Ellen Prager*



**Endangered Habitats League**

Dan Silver, Executive Director, Los Angeles, CA

*Dan Silver*



**ECOMB: Environmental Coalition of Miami & the Beaches**

Luiz Rodrigues, Executive Director, Miami Beach, FL

*Luiz Rodrigues*



**Florida Conservation Alliance**  
Ilysia Shattuck, Director, Fort Lauderdale, FL

*Ilysia Shattuck*



**Friends of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument**  
Mr. Ignacio V. Cabrera, Chairman, Saipan, CNMI

*Ignacio V. Cabrera*



**Global Coral Reef Alliance (GCRA)**  
Thomas J. Goreau, Ph.D., President, Cambridge, MA

*Thomas J. Goreau*

**Global Coral Reef Alliance (GCRA)**

**Guanaja Mangrove Restoration**  
Scott Duncan, Director, South Portland, ME

*Scott Duncan*

**Guanaja Mangrove Restoration**

**Island Resources Foundation**  
Bruce G. Potter, President, Washington, DC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce G. Potter".



**KAHEA: The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance**  
Miwa Tamanaha, Executive Director, Honolulu, HI

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miwa Tamanaha".



**The Ocean Project**  
Bill Mott, Director, Providence, RI

*Bill Mott*

**The Ocean Project**

**Malama Kai Foundation**  
Terry O'Halloran, Executive Director, Kamuela, HI

*Terry O'Halloran*



**Ocean Defenders Alliance**  
Scott Sheckman, Executive Director, Huntington Beach, CA

*Scott Sheckman*



**Ocean Revolution**  
Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D., Founder & Co-Director, Davenport, CA

*Wallace J. Nichols*



**Pro Peninsula - Ocean Connectors Program**  
Frances Kinney, Director, San Diego, CA

*Frances Kinney*



**SandyHook SeaLife Foundation**  
Mary M. Hamilton, Executive Director, Highlands, NJ

*Mary M. Hamilton*

**SandyHook SeaLife Foundation**

**Save Our Seas**

Capt. Paul Clark, President, Hanalei, HI

*Paul Clark*



**ScienceFish.com**

Refik Orhun, Ph.D., Founder, Miami, FL

*Refik Orhun*

**ScienceFish.com**

**Sea Turtle Conservancy**

David Godfrey, Executive Director, Gainesville, FL

*Brad Natul*



**South Carolina Coastal Conservation League**

Dana Beach, Executive Director, Charleston, SC

*Dana Beach*



**Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island**

Arthur H. Kopelman, Ph. D., President, Long Island, NY

*Arthur H. Kopelman*



**Beautify CNMI!**

Cinta M. Kaipat, Founder, Saipan, CNMI

*Cinta M. Kaipat*



**The Interfaith Council for the Protection of Animals and Nature (ICPAN)**

Lewis Regenstein, President, Atlanta, GA

*Lewis Regenstein*

**ICPAN**

**Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation**

CAPT Philip G. Renaud, USN (ret), Executive Director, Landover, MD

*Philip G. Renaud*



**The Snorkel Bob Foundation**

Robert Wintner, Executive Director, Kihei, HI

*Robert Wintner*



**WIDECAST: Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network**

Karen Eckert, Ph.D., Executive Director, Beaufort, NC

*Karen Eckert*



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**International** - Twenty signatories from sixteen countries:

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**Andros Conservancy and Trust (ANCAT)**

Peter Douglas, Executive Director, Fresh Creek, Andros, Bahamas

*Peter Douglas*



**Blue Ventures Conservation**

Alasdair Harris, Ph.D., Research Director, London, United Kingdom

*Alasdair Harris*



**Cartagena's Youth Declaration on Climate Change Group**

Viviana Mourra, Representative, Cartagena, Republic of Colombia

*Viviana Mourra*



**Centro Ecologico Akumal**

Paul Sanchez-Navarro, Director, Quintana Roo, México

*Paul Sanchez-Navarro*



**CIANGO: Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organizations**

Mrs. Tuaine Marsters, President, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

*Cinta M. Kaipat*



**Friends of the Environment**

Kristin Williams, Executive Director, Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas

*Kristin Williams*



**Global Islands Network**

Graeme Robertson, Executive Director, Inverness, Scotland, United Kingdom

*Graeme Robertson*



**Marine Conservation Society**

Mrs. Sam Fanshawe, Director, Herefordshire, United Kingdom

*Sam Fanshawe*



**MAUDESCO: Mauritius Council for Development Environmental Studies and Conservation**

Rajen Awotar, Executive Director, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius

*Rajen Awotar*



**Melanesian NGO Centre for Leadership (MNCL)**

Ms. Margaret Sete, Port Moreby, Papua New Guinea

*Ms. Margaret Sete*





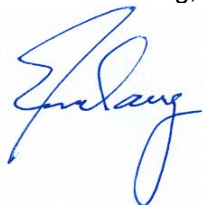
**NIUANGO: Niue Island Association of NGOs**

Mr. Hiva Levi, Niue Island

*Mr. Hiva Levi*

**Palau Conservation Society**

Mr. Elbuchel Sadang, Executive Director, Koror, Palau



**NIUANGO**



**Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development**

Mary Toy, Co-Chair, Placencia, Belize

*Mary Toy*



**Rainbow Warriors Core Foundation (Rainbow Warriors International)**

Milton Ponson, President, Oranjestad, Aruba, Dutch Caribbean

*Milton Ponson*



**Saint Lucia National Trust**

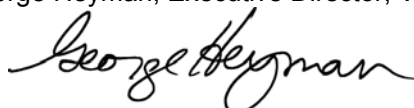
Bishnu Tulsie, Director, Castries, Saint Lucia

*Bishnu Tulsie*



**Sierra Club British Columbia**

George Heyman, Executive Director, Victoria, BC, Canada



**SUNGO: Samoa Umbrella for Non Governmental Organisations**

High Chief Vaasiliifili Moelagi Jackson, SUNGO National President, Apia, Independent State of Samoa

*Vaasiliifili Moelagi Jackson*



**TierraMar Consulting Pty Limited**

Anissa Lawrence, Director, Sutherland, NSW, Australia

*Anissa Lawrence*

**TierraMar  
Consulting**

**TNYC: Tonga National Youth Congress**

Miss Siaila Jagroop, Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga

*Miss Siaila Jagroop*



**WetlandCare Australia Ltd**

Anissa Lawrence, Director, Ballina, NSW, Australia

*Anissa Lawrence*



Copied to: Carol Browner, Director, White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy  
Dr. John Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Hillary R. Clinton, Secretary, U.S. Department of State, Chair of the Board of  
Directors, Millennium Challenge Corporation  
Rajiv Shah, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development  
Dr. Steven Chu, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy  
Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Gary Locke, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and  
NOAA Administrator  
Ken Salazar, Secretary, Department of the Interior  
Rowan W. Gould, Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Contact: Steven J. Lutz, Blue Climate Solutions, [steven.lutz@blueclimatesolutions.org](mailto:steven.lutz@blueclimatesolutions.org)

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#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Gross Domestic Product by State, June 2009.  
Available at: [http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2009/06%20June/0609\\_gdp\\_state.pdf](http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2009/06%20June/0609_gdp_state.pdf)
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[http://myfwc.com/conservation/Conservation\\_ValueofConservation\\_EconSaltwaterImpact.htm](http://myfwc.com/conservation/Conservation_ValueofConservation_EconSaltwaterImpact.htm)
- <sup>3</sup> Nellemann, C., Corcoran, E., Duarte, C. M., Valdés, L., De Young, C., Fonseca, L., Grimsditch, G. (Eds). 2009. Blue Carbon: The Role of Healthy Oceans in Binding Carbon. A Rapid Response Assessment. United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal. Norway, 79 pp.  
Available at: <http://www.grida.no/publications/rr/blue-carbon/>
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- <sup>5</sup> Stedman, S., Dahl, T. 2008. Status and trends of wetlands in the coastal watersheds of the Eastern United States 1998 to 2004. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. 32 pp. Available at:  
[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatprotection/pdf/wetlands/WetlandsReport\\_012909.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatprotection/pdf/wetlands/WetlandsReport_012909.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> Wording includes “wetlands” and “vegetated marine coastal habitats” under eligible offset projects. Endorsed by John Kerry (MA), Joseph Lieberman (CT), Debbie Ann Stabenow (MI), Max Baucus (MT), Mark Begich (AK), Sherrod Brown (OH), Robert Casey (PA), Thomas Harkin (IA), Amy Klobuchar (MN), Bill Nelson (FL), and Jeanne Shaheen (NH) (111<sup>th</sup> Congress).