

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 486

Recognizing World Oceans Day and the necessity to protect, conserve,
maintain, and rebuild our ocean and its resources.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 2023

Ms. BONAMICI (for herself, Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mr. CASE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. SOTO, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. KILMER, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. SALAZAR, and Mr. LIEU) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Recognizing World Oceans Day and the necessity to protect,
conserve, maintain, and rebuild our ocean and its resources.

Whereas the ocean covers more than 70 percent of our planet's surface;

Whereas the ocean generates the oxygen we breathe, regulates our climate and weather patterns, supplies food, is a source of cultural value, supports tourism and trade, and is an untapped energy resource;

Whereas Indigenous people have stewarded our oceans and are deeply connected to the oceans as a key component of culture, food security, and spirituality;

Whereas scientists estimate more than 80 percent of the ocean remains unexplored, and the United States has committed to advance a National Strategy on Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization;

Whereas the health of our ocean is a reflection of the health of our planet;

Whereas the United States has joined the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and committed to advancing a national sustainable economy plan by 2026;

Whereas the White House Ocean Policy Committee has committed to advancing coordinated Federal action on ocean and coastal management, science, technology, and advancing an ocean climate action plan;

Whereas 2023 marks the third year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (in this resolution referred to as “the Decade”);

Whereas the Decade will help accelerate research to address gaps in ocean science, strengthen international cooperation, and improve ocean management;

Whereas a scientific priority of the Decade is to create a comprehensive digital atlas of the ocean and strengthen ocean observations;

Whereas changes in ocean chemistry, temperature, and biodiversity pose a very real threat to marine resources, industries, and jobs;

Whereas approximately one-fourth of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere dissolves into our ocean, causing water chemistry to change and become more acidic;

Whereas ocean acidification harms oysters, mussels, lobsters, clams, corals, and other species building shells and skeletons and reproducing;

Whereas some finfish experience neurological changes in acidic waters, altering their behaviors and actions;

Whereas 45 percent of all marine mammals on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species have been affected by lost and abandoned fishing gear;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the ocean has taken up more than 90 percent of excess heat in the climate system since 1970, and marine heat waves are very likely to become longer lasting, more intense, and more extensive;

Whereas, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 80 percent of pollution to the ocean comes from land;

Whereas increased temperatures and nutrient runoff can result in harmful algal blooms that accumulate, die, decompose, and consume oxygen, leaving waterways in a hypoxic or anoxic state that can result in massive fish kills and the formation of “dead zones” where marine life cannot survive;

Whereas the decrease in biodiversity, and decline and shifts in distribution of fish, will affect the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities;

Whereas Tribes have a right and a deep cultural and historical connection to the fisheries threatened by changing ocean conditions;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, more than 11,000,000 tons of plastic end up in the ocean each year from land-based sources alone;

Whereas recent studies suggest that lost, abandoned, or otherwise discarded fishing gear could make up 46 to 70 percent of the floating macroplastic in the ocean gyres by weight;

Whereas marine debris harms our coastal economies, endangers marine life, destroys important marine habitats, propagates invasive species, and creates hazardous conditions for the maritime industry;

Whereas tiny pieces of plastics, fibers, fragments, and microbeads also make their way into the marine food web, blocking digestive tracts, altering growth, and in some cases killing animals and marine organisms;

Whereas marine debris is considered a growing global crisis that requires collaborative work with partners from across the world;

Whereas the United Nations has recognized that vulnerable communities disproportionately suffer the consequences of environmental degradation caused by plastic pollution and recognizes that environmental justice should be a consideration in marine conservation;

Whereas we need to improve our understanding of the implications of environmental stressors, such as ocean acidification, harmful algal blooms, hypoxia, marine debris, warming ocean temperatures, overfishing, and rising sea levels;

Whereas many of these environmental stressors are indicators of a changing climate and threaten our economy and the livelihood of vulnerable coastal communities;

Whereas 5 to 30 percent of global harvestable fish stocks are affected by ghost gear every year, threatening global food security, coastal communities, and fisher livelihoods;

Whereas across the United States, coastal communities contribute \$9,500,000,000,000 to the United States economy annually as well as support 58,300,000 jobs;

Whereas, in 2008, the United Nations General Assembly designated June 8 as “World Oceans Day”; and

Whereas World Oceans Day provides an opportunity to recommit to protect, conserve, maintain, and rebuild our ocean and its resources: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes World Oceans Day and affirms
3 the individual and collective duty, both nationally
4 and internationally, to protect, conserve, maintain,
5 and rebuild our ocean and its resources;

6 (2) affirms the stewardship of ocean resources,
7 cultures, and communities that are vital to both
8 present and future generations; and

9 (3) commits to increasing the investment of
10 Federal funds in scientific research and monitoring
11 to better understand our changing ocean and em-
12 power the Federal Government to address and miti-
13 gate the effects of the changing climate, solve man-
14 agement challenges, and accomplish the goals of the

- 1 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sus-
- 2 tainable Development.

