

September 24, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

**THE SENATE SHOULD APPROVE
U.S. ACCESSION TO THE LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION**

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

We, the undersigned, urge the Senate to expeditiously provide its advice and consent for United States accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We agree with President Bush's statement of May 15, 2007, in which he asserted that accession to the Convention is essential to protect national security interests, secure sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, and promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the oceans. We strongly urge the Senate to approve the Convention before the adjournment of this session of Congress.

The Convention has been thoroughly reviewed in numerous Senate hearings and public forums. It has overwhelming bipartisan support from a broad and diverse range of interests that have carefully considered the issues from a variety of perspectives. It is clear that accession will protect and enhance our country's sovereign military, economic, and environmental interests.

The Convention codifies and strengthens freedoms of navigation and overflight that are essential to U.S. military mobility. The Navy and Coast Guard have testified that joining the Convention will strengthen our ability to defend these and other important maritime rights and will enhance our national and homeland security efforts. Recent statements of support for accession from National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England reinforce the important national security benefits that will accompany accession.

All major U.S. ocean industries, including offshore energy, maritime transportation and commerce, fishing, and shipbuilding, support U.S. accession to the Convention because its provisions help protect vital U.S. economic interests and provide the certainty and stability crucial for investment in global maritime enterprises.

Environmental organizations also strongly support the Convention. As a party, the United States would be in the best position to lead future applications of this framework for regional and international cooperation in protecting and preserving the marine environment.

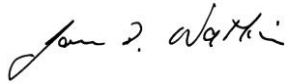
The Congressionally-mandated and Presidentially-appointed U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the independent Pew Oceans Commission both unanimously recommend accession to the Convention as an important part of a comprehensive and coordinated U.S. ocean policy.

Currently, 155 nations are party to the Law of the Sea Convention. Yet, despite an exceptional level of diverse bipartisan support, the United States remains the primary industrialized nation not a party to the

Convention. U.S. accession to the Convention would send a clear message in support of our efforts to foster international approaches, while significantly furthering our own national interests.

The Senate should move expeditiously to consider and approve U.S. accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

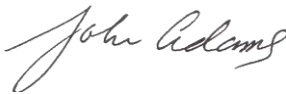
cc: President George W. Bush
Vice President Richard B. Cheney
Secretary Condoleezza Rice
Secretary Robert M. Gates
Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Senator Richard G. Lugar




James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission
Co-Chair, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative



John Adams
Co-Founder
Natural Resources Defense Council



Madeleine Albright
Former Secretary of State
Chairman, Board of Directors
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Bruce Babbitt
Former Secretary of the Interior
Chairman, Board of Directors, World Wildlife Fund



James A. Baker, III
Former Secretary of State
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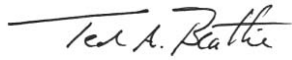
Governor John Baldacci
State of Maine



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Professor, Graduate School of Oceanography
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Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council



Senator John B. Breaux
Senior Counsel
Patton Boggs LLP



Charles J. Brown
President and CEO
Citizens for Global Solutions



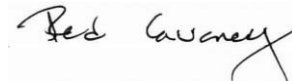
Governor Felix Camacho
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Governor Donald Carcieri
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Eileen Claussen
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James M. Coleman
Boyd Professor, Coastal Studies Institute
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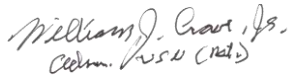
John Connelly
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Joseph J. Cox
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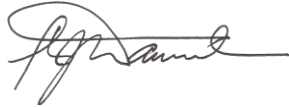
Walter Cronkite
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Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
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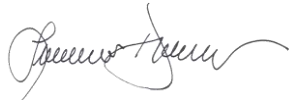
Ann D'Amato
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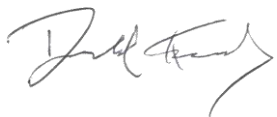
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Donald Kennedy
Editor in Chief, Science Magazine, American
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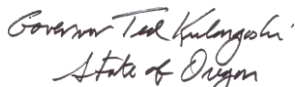
Charles Kennel
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World Shipping Council



Governor Ted Kulongoski
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Former National Security Advisor
Chairman, McFarlane Associates, Inc.



Governor Ruth Ann Minner
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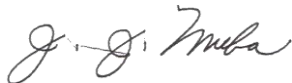
Senator George J. Mitchell
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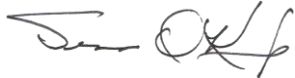
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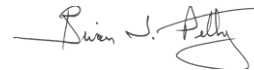
Sean O'Keefe
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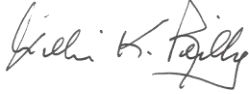
Thomas R. Pickering
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Colin Powell
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A.F. Spilhaus, Jr.
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Governor Eliot Spitzer
State of New York



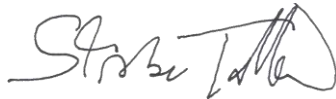
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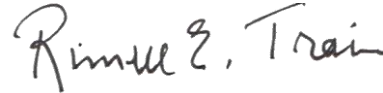
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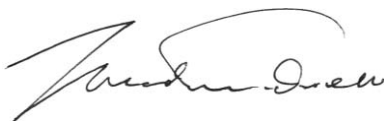
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Strobe Talbott
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World Wildlife Fund



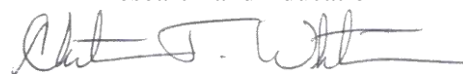
Mead Treadwell
Chairman
U.S. Arctic Research Commission



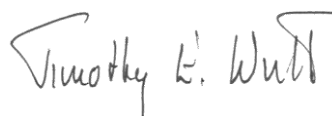
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Patten D. White
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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission



Christine Todd Whitman
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