

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Ocean Climate Action Plan offers Cure for Post-Pandemic Economy with Solutions for Climate Emergency

## Adds Missing Pieces to House Climate Change Framework

**MONTEREY, CA — July 13, 2020** The Center for the Blue Economy at the Middlebury Institute in Monterey, CA, and Blue Frontier, a leading ocean conservation and policy group, just issued a unique, comprehensive, Ocean Climate Action Plan, offering a cure for the battered post-pandemic economy and new approaches to the climate emergency.

But timing and quick action are essential. Even without the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's hurricane season storms are likely to be 30% more destructive than similar storms that came ashore in 1980 due to climate impacts, according to a new study by NOAA.

“Now is the time to make the strategic investments that will help decarbonize the economy, promote innovation that creates many new jobs and industries, and directly addresses the economic inequalities and injustices that ravage the nation,” says **Jason Scorse**, Director of the [Center for the Blue Economy](#). “A healthy coastal ecosystem and a thriving blue economy will enhance human well-being, and will pay us back many times over.”

The Ocean Climate Action Plan (OCAP)—Blue New Deal—is a non-partisan, broad-reaching policy framework that includes investing in living shorelines, federal flood insurance reform, offshore clean energy, port operations, shipping, fisheries, aquaculture, marine biodiversity, and education. These solutions have been missing from earlier Congressional climate change approaches, including the Green New Deal. Many appear in the new Democratic Climate Plan, however, OCAP adds additional and practical solution-oriented proposals that go beyond the current Democratic thinking.

OCAP includes policies that will benefit coastal communities across the US, especially in the Gulf States that are most at risk from storms, but also inland communities in the industrial heartland who will benefit from alternative seafood production due to their large skilled workforce and low-cost real estate. The mid-Atlantic regions with the best offshore wind capacity will benefit from OCAP's recommendations to streamline permitting and regulatory requirements. And the Pacific Northwest will benefit greatly from a new federal focus on sustainable aquaculture, including shellfish that can reduce our seafood trade deficit.

“We are pleased with our collaboration across many sectors and industries, including conservationists, maritime industries, municipalities, communities at risk, youth activists, and the financial sector,” says **David Helvarg**, Executive Director of [Blue Frontier](#). “Congress will be able to draw on these recommendations to resolve the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken so many lives and caused so much economic hardship.”

Development of the Ocean Climate Action Plan began in March 2019. Feedback following meetings with representatives from Native American Nations and tribal organizations, a Youth Advisory Council, plus additional input from leading conservation NGOs, state and local leaders, and the maritime and financial industries, have been incorporated into this final report. These recommendations represent a unique approach and the collective wisdom of hundreds of the leading marine and coastal organizations and researchers from across the nation.

“We are working to assure change,” says Charley Peebler, 16, a founder of the group [Heirs to Our Oceans](#), and a member of the OCAP Youth Advisory Council. “We have been involved to make sure that the next generation has a healthy future.”

The policies and investments outlined in the OCAP report are meant to form the basis for federal legislation that will make America a world leader in many of the innovative blue economy industries that will define the 21st century. The plan lays out the best policies to put America back on track with the new Congress in January 2021. These new investments will protect and sustain existing industries, while developing and expanding new ones, leading to many good stable jobs, sustained economic growth, as well as the restoration of our prized coastal and marine habitats.

OCAP will ensure that ocean resources are put to use to dramatically reduce GHG emissions and that coastal communities across the country are able to effectively and equitably adapt to coastal climate impacts, which include rising sea levels, greater storm frequency, harmful algal blooms, and ocean acidification.

One of OCAP’s central tenets—repeated throughout the plan—is that investments and economic support must be made available to all to meet these needs, with special attention paid to and in collaboration with the most vulnerable communities of color, low-income groups, and tribal/Indigenous entities in our inland ocean and coastal regions.

Congressional leaders already committed to the Ocean Climate Action Plan include: Senator **Jeff Merkley** (D-OR), Rep. **Deb Haaland** (D-NM) and Rep. **Joe Cunningham** (D-SC).

To see video of Congressional leaders supporting the Ocean Climate Action Plan, to download a copy of the full report, and to download photos, logos, and more information, go to: [Ocean Climate Action Plan \(#BlueNewDeal\) Press Kit](#).



## **About the Center for the Blue Economy**

Our mission at the Center for the Blue Economy is to promote a sustainable, resilient ocean and coastal economy (the “blue economy”) through leadership in research, analysis, and education. The blue economy comprises the economic activities that create sustainable wealth from the world’s oceans and coasts. The center examines ways that ocean and coastal resources can support economic development and enhance healthy, resilient oceans and well-managed coastlines. Our research focuses on helping organizations understand how to measure the size and changing nature of economic relationships with the oceans and coasts in order to guide choices and monitor progress, and the economics of climate change adaptation in coastal regions.

## **About Blue Frontier**

Blue Frontier builds the solution-oriented citizen engagement needed to protect our ocean, coasts and the communities, both human and wild that depend on them. We were founded in 2003 by award-winning author and journalist David Helvarg, and with support from public figures such as Dr. Sylvia Earle, Robert Kennedy Jr., Ralph Nader, Philippe Cousteau, former Representatives Sam Farr (D-CA) and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD). Blue Frontier convenes key stakeholders including conscientious corporate and commercial entities such as Google, the Port of Los Angeles, Ocean First Divers, and Legal Sea Foods. Blue Frontier is primarily active at the marine grassroots (“seaweed”) level however, with links to 1,400 ocean organizations large and small, spanning coastal states and the heartland.

*Note to Media: All photo, video and report excerpts credit: Ocean Climate Action Plan*

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