

THE OCEAN-BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS ACT

May 2021

There is no question – the climate crisis is the greatest threat to America’s economy, national security, public health, and natural resources. Since we began pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere over a century ago, the ocean has buffered the devastating impacts of climate change by absorbing 90 percent of the excess heat and about one-third of the surplus carbon. Scientists have found the ocean can be a major component of the climate solution: twenty-one percent of the global greenhouse gas equation can be solved with ocean-based solutions. Congress must take immediate ocean climate action to support and sustain our nation and the global climate. Chair Raúl Grijalva’s Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act provides the blueprint for ocean climate action and protecting the habitat and ecosystems that humanity depends upon.

The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2021 is the most determined and practical ocean policy proposal to date. This comprehensive bill integrates evidence-based approaches to protect our ocean and coastal communities, promotes sustainable job opportunities, and supports renewable offshore energy while reducing the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act prioritizes just and equitable climate solutions for communities of color, low-income communities, Tribal and Indigenous communities, the U.S. Territories, and Freely Associated States.

KEY OCEAN SOLUTIONS IN THE BILL:

- Protects and restores “blue carbon” ecosystems
- Promotes offshore wind energy and research while prohibiting offshore fossil fuel activity
- Promotes climate-ready fisheries and eliminates fishing subsidies in trade agreements
- Enhances the fuel efficiency of our fishing vessel fleet
- Establishes a climate and fisheries research and management program
- Creates a restorative ocean aquaculture research and policy program
- Updates the Coastal Barrier Resource Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act
- Promotes climate resiliency of Insular Areas
- Protects marine mammals through vessel speed programs
- Addresses U.N. Sustainable Development Goal #14, to conserve and sustainably use the ocean
- Expands climate mitigation efforts in the Arctic
- Promotes coastal resiliency through living shorelines, coastal community adaptation, and more
- Establishes a grant program for shovel-ready projects that promote resilient coastlines and fisheries
- Researches, forecasts, and mitigates ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms
- Codifies Regional Ocean Partnerships, enhances ocean data collection and monitoring, and creates a centralized website for resiliency grants
- Addresses greenhouse gas pollution from shipping vessels
- Establishes a manufacturers fee on virgin single-use plastic production
- Requires studies on deep sea mining, blue carbon, Great Lakes and ocean climate impacts, high seas fishing, public access to coasts, stressors on estuarine environments, black carbon, marine protected areas, and marine biodiversity