



For Immediate Release
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**Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye Honored
For Leadership to Protect, Promote Nation's Oceans**

**National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
2005 Annual Leadership Award**

Washington, DC - In recognition of his leadership and longstanding commitment to protecting the nation's oceans and coastal resources, Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) is being honored with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NSMF) 2005 Leadership Award during a June 7 ceremony at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC. The Award comes on the eve of World Oceans Day, June 8.

"I thank the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for honoring me with its Leadership Award," said Senator Inouye. "Our environmental and economic well-being are inextricably tied to the health of our nation's oceans. As a representative of nearly one quarter of the nation's exclusive economic zone, I am fully committed to protecting and conserving coastal and marine resources in the western Pacific. To that end, I commend the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the people of Hawaii for their involvement in the ongoing designation of the world's largest marine protected area, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary."

Senator Inouye was presented the Award by world renowned ocean-explorer, filmmaker and activist Jean-Michel Cousteau. "Hawaii and the nation at large are truly blessed to have this visionary leader." said Cousteau. "I know Senator Inouye shares my sense of awe and wonder about the many marine jewels of his home state because time and time again he has demonstrated his commitment to the protection and preservation of these underwater treasures."

Senator Inouye, who serves as Co-chair of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, has been a strong advocate of additional funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, securing \$61 million in 2004 to expand the Agency's presence in Hawaii.

Perhaps one of Senator Inouye's greatest ocean-related accomplishments has been the establishment of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary in 1992. In addition to protecting numerous endangered species, the sanctuary has become the major focal point for research and collaboration on marine issues in the Western Pacific.

"Few serving in the halls of Congress bring as much passion and energy to the issues of preserving and promoting our nation's oceans and freshwater resources as Senator Inouye," said NMSF Executive Director Lori Arguelles. "It is an honor to be able to pay tribute to a public servant who has worked so tirelessly to raise awareness about important ocean and coastal issues, and especially for his work on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary."

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the 2005 Capitol Hill Oceans week, a three-day symposium that features ocean policy experts from government, private industry, nonprofits and academia. Participants look to raise awareness of important ocean and coastal issues among our nation's leaders and to build bridges among various ocean constituencies. The forum seeks to continue the momentum to reform national ocean policy through the Bush Administration's U.S. Ocean Action plan, as well as ocean and coastal legislation pending in Congress.

Senator Inouye is being honored along with Michigan Congressman Vernon Ehlers (R-03) and Maryland Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (R-01), as well as former U.S. Senator and Governor of Connecticut Lowell Weicker (R), who will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary Program. It was created to inspire all people to preserve, protect and promote our nationwide network of marine sanctuaries. The 14 sites within the national marine sanctuary system protect oceans and great lakes from the Florida Keys to the Hawaiian Islands and from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico.

