



\*\*\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*\*\*  
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## CONGRESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR ROLES IN OCEAN PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

(Washington, DC) A veritable “Who’s Who” of the ocean world will be on hand as the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation presents its annual Leadership Awards to U.S. **Senator Olympia J. Snowe** (R-ME) and to the four Co-Chairs of the House Oceans Caucus, U.S. **Representative Tom Allen** (D-ME), U.S. **Representative Sam Farr** (D-CA), U.S. **Representative Jim Greenwood** (R-PA), and U.S. **Representative Curt Weldon** (R-PA) on June 8<sup>th</sup>, as part of Capitol Hill Oceans Week. The Leadership Award recognizes each individual’s long-term contributions to ocean protection and preservation.

Keynote remarks will be delivered by **The Honorable Leon Panetta, who will also serve as Master of Ceremonies** for the evening. Panetta, a National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Trustee, served as Chair of the Pew Oceans Commission, which last year released its report entitled “America’s Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Sea Change.” Special guests include **Admiral James Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chair of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**, which recently released its draft report for comment. The Leadership Awards will be presented by **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Trustees Jean-Michel Cousteau and Dr. Sylvia Earle**.

“The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is delighted to have the opportunity to express its gratitude to these extraordinary individuals whose enthusiasm and diligence have contributed so much to our National Marine Sanctuary Program and to ocean preservation in general,” said Panetta.

**Senator Snowe** serves on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and since 1997, has been a leader of its Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Coast Guard. She has helped guide a number of substantial ocean bills into law, including the National Marine Sanctuaries Amendments Act of 2000, the Oceans Act of 2000, and the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. Snowe has authored legislation reauthorizing the nation's most important federal planning and conservation program for coastal areas, the Coastal Zone Management Act. She also recently sponsored the Fishery Conservation and Management Amendments Act of 2004, which would increase the role of ecosystem science in national fisheries management.

"I'm honored that the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation has presented me with its Leadership Award," said Snowe. "As our environmental and economic health are directly linked to our oceans and coasts, it is critical that we do more to protect these essential resources. Even while we probe the surface of Mars, we have to realize that 95% of the world's oceans remain unexplored. That is why we must make investing in our oceans a greater national priority. I commend the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for its valiant work and will continue to fight to preserve our oceans."

The four co-chairs of the House Oceans Caucus are also being honored with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Leadership Award, including Representatives Tom Allen (D-ME), Sam Farr (D-CA), Jim Greenwood (R-PA) and Curt Weldon (R-PA).

**Tom Allen** represents Maine's coastal First Congressional District and serves as a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and its subcommittees on Energy and Air Quality, Environment and Hazardous Materials, and Oversight and Investigations. Allen is also a Democratic Whip at Large. He has worked to establish ocean observing systems, set fishing quota standards, protect marine mammals, and reduce mercury emissions.

"The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation has been in the vanguard of efforts to protect America's vitally important ocean resources. By bestowing this honor on us, the Foundation is recognizing the House Oceans Caucus for our success in focusing greater attention on oceans policy in Congress," said Allen. "I look forward to continuing our work with the Foundation, other concerned interests, and my colleagues in the House to develop and implement an agenda that will ensure the health and productivity of marine environments for generations to come."

**Sam Farr** represents the 17th Congressional District along California's beautiful Central Coast, which includes the length of the Big Sur coastline and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. He serves on the House Committee on Appropriations and its subcommittees on Agriculture and Military Construction. During his tenure, Farr has established himself as a leader in the House by chairing California's Democratic Congressional Delegation.

"I have loved and cared about the oceans throughout my life and working to protect and preserve them is second nature to me," said Farr. "I am honored to receive this Leadership Award from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and look forward to continuing my productive relationship with the F o u n d a t i o n . "

**Jim Greenwood** represents Pennsylvania's 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and serves as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. As Chairman of its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, he leads inquiries into such matters as the security of our ports. Greenwood is a member of the Congressional Coastal Caucus and currently serves as the President of Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment International.

"I am very honored to be sharing this award with my fellow House Oceans Caucus Co-chairs and Senator Snowe. When we co-founded the House Oceans Caucus four years ago, our mission was to draw focused attention to an issue that affects all Americans and transcends ethnic, geographic, religious, political and social boundaries, and I believe that we are beginning to achieve this goal," said Greenwood. "Now, more than ever, we have reached a perfect storm of oceans information. It is up to policy makers to take the recommendations of the Pew Oceans Commission, the National Research Council, and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and draft comprehensive legislation that will provide for the sustainability of the oceans for generations to come."

**Curt Weldon** represents the Seventh Congressional District of Pennsylvania and now in his 9<sup>th</sup> term, is the most senior Republican in the Pennsylvania Delegation. He serves as Vice Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces. Weldon has taken leadership roles on a wide variety of issues, ranging from national security to the environment.

"It is truly an honor to receive the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Leadership Award along with my fellow co-chairs of the House Oceans Caucus," said Weldon. "For the past four years, Capitol Hill Oceans Week has brought together government, industry and academia to discuss critical oceans issues. I would like to thank the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for honoring me with this award and for the critical role the Foundation plays in organizing Capitol Hill Oceans Week. I look forward to the continued success of this program and a monumental year for our nation's oceans."

The Foundation will also present its Volunteer of the Year Award to Stephanie Harlan of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Harlan started her volunteer work for the National Marine Sanctuary Program through her tireless efforts to help designate the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in the early 1990s. She promoted the sanctuary as both a citizen and member of the Capitola City Council, where she now serves as Mayor. Harlan went on to become a member of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and served as its Chair from April 2000-April 2004.

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner kicks off Capitol Hill Oceans Week, a two-day symposium on Capitol Hill, June 9-10. Now in its fourth year, this symposium, coordinated by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, has established itself as one of the most important events of the year for exchanging knowledge and ideas about ocean issues and policies.

This year, representatives from government, private industry, nonprofits, and academia will focus on 'Managing Our Marine Areas' (Wednesday, June 9) and the 'Wonders of the Ocean World: Exploring, Monitoring and Educating' (Thursday, June 10). Each panel discussion will begin with an overview from a Member of Congress. Exhibitors will join the symposium on Wednesday, June 9, for the *Ocean Fair*, which will feature some of the most successful marine management and exploration programs in the country.

Congressional Co-Hosts of CHOW 2004 include the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; the House Committee on Science; and the House Oceans Caucus.

Capitol Hill Oceans Week is sponsored by the Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation, Perot Systems Government Services Inc., Booz Allen Hamilton, Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education, Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration's Immersion Project, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Geographic Society, Bombardier Recreational Products Inc., Center for SeaChange, Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership/Coastal America, International SeaKeepers Society, Mote Marine Laboratory, National Marine Manufacturers Association, National Ocean Industries Association, and the Ocean Foundation.

Federal partners include the U.S. Department of Commerce's NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program and NOAA Office of Exploration, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private sector, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary Program, part of the U.S. Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation works to complement the outreach and education efforts of the nationwide network of 13 marine sanctuaries. Stretching from the Flower Garden Banks in the Gulf of Mexico to Thunder Bay in the Great Lakes, and from the Hawaiian Islands to the Florida Keys, the National Marine Sanctuary Program covers approximately 18,000 square nautical miles.

**Media must schedule with Laurie Howell – see above. Also see more details at [www.nmsfocean.org](http://www.nmsfocean.org).**