



For Immediate Release
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**US Commission on Ocean Policy Chair Admiral James D. Watkins
(Ret.) Honored
For Leadership to Protect, Promote Nation's Oceans**

**National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
2006 Annual Lifetime Achievement Award**

Washington, DC - By virtue of his exceptional work, as well as his commitment and leadership in helping to protect our nation's ocean and coastal waters and resources, Admiral James D. Watkins (Ret.) was honored with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NSMF) Lifetime Achievement Award during a June 13th dinner at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC. Watkins will receive the award with former Clinton White House Chief of Staff and fellow Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Co-Chair, The Honorable Leon Panetta.

"It is truly an honor to be receiving this Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation," said Watkins. "Although we have come a long way in our fight to increase awareness of ocean issues and the problems they face, we must do more to protect our ocean and coastal resources. We are in desperate need of greater public and political support for science, management, and education if we are to reverse the tide and begin restoring the health and productivity of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. . I look forward to continuing to work with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the great work they do to save this precious resource."

For much of his post-military life, Admiral Watkins has been a strong and steady voice in support for our nation's oceans. After a successful stint as Secretary of Energy to President George H.W. Bush, Admiral Watkins served as President of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI) from 1993 to 2000, during which time he founded the public-private corporation known as the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE). In 2001 he was appointed by President Bush to the Congressionally mandated US Commission on Ocean Policy, serving as its Chairman and guiding the development of the Commission's recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy.

Currently, Watkins and Panetta serve as Co-Chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, which grew out of the ocean advocacy work done by the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Ocean Commission. The Initiative has worked tirelessly to push for reform to implement and fund ocean policies that protect and enhance the value of our oceans, coasts, and their resources for future use.

"It is only fitting that Admiral James Watkins and Leon Panetta both receive this Lifetime Achievement Award together," said NMSF Chairman Terry Garcia. "Their separate work on ocean and coastal issues has been enhanced by their coming together to form the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and is helping to ensure the viability and security of our nation's waters."

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the 2006 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. Topics covered during this year's symposium will include alternative energy sources, marine debris, invasive species, the Census of Marine Life, the next steps in the development of an ocean observations system, a legislative agenda for Capitol Hill, and a regional Gulf of Maine panel focused on ecosystem management innovations.

Admiral Watkins and Mr. Panetta are being honored along with U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA), both of whom are receiving 2006 Leadership Awards from the NMSF.

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.