

THE OCEAN-BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS ACT

October 2020

There is no question – the climate crisis is the greatest threat to America’s national security, public health, natural resources, and economy. Since humans began pumping greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere over a century ago, the ocean has been a natural safeguard from the devastating impacts of climate change by absorbing 90 percent of the excess heat and about a third of the surplus carbon. Twenty-one percent of the greenhouse gas equation can, and must, be solved with the ocean. Congress must take courageous action to lead us towards a climate resilient ocean that supports and sustains our nation. The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act provides a strategic roadmap for ocean climate action and meaningful steps towards protecting the habitat and ecosystems that humanity depends upon.

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

KEY OCEAN SOLUTIONS IN THE BILL:

- Protects and restores “blue carbon” ecosystems
- Promotes wetland health and restoration
- Establishes a pathway forward to protect 30 percent of our ocean by 2030
- Prohibits oil and gas leasing in all areas of the Outer Continental Shelf
- Promotes offshore wind energy and other marine energy research
- 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 management program
- Creates a restorative ocean aquaculture research and policy program
- Amends the coastal Barrier Resource Act
- Reauthorizes the Coastal Zone Management Act
- Promotes climate resiliency of Insular Areas
- Protects marine mammals through vessel speed programs
- Expands climate mitigation efforts in the Arctic
- Promote coastal resiliency and adaptation through living shorelines, coastal community adaptation, and more
- Enhances ocean health by researching, forecasting, and mitigating ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms
- Codifies a National Ocean Policy, enhances ocean data collection and monitoring, and creates a centralized website for resiliency grants
- Establishes a grant program for shovel-ready projects that promote climate resilient coastlines and fisheries