

Senate Oceans Caucus

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The **Senate Oceans Caucus** is a bipartisan caucus working to increase awareness and find common ground in responding to issues facing the oceans and coasts.^[1] The caucus was originally co-chaired by Senators Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska;^[2]

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Membership

The founding members of the Caucus were:^[3]

- Co-Chair Sheldon Whitehouse
- Co-Chair Lisa Murkowski
- Honorary Co-Chair Mark Begich
- Michael Bennet
- Richard Blumenthal
- Barbara Boxer
- Maria Cantwell
- Benjamin Cardin
- Tom Carper
- Chris Coons
- Lindsey Graham
- Mary Landrieu
- Jeff Merkley
- Chris Murphy
- Patty Murray
- Jack Reed
- Brian Schatz
- Ron Wyden

Founding members

The Caucus was founded September 17, 2011 by 18 Senators of both parties. Founding members include Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Chair, Mark Begich (D-AK), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Committee on Environment and Public Works Chair, Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Scott Brown (R-MA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife Chair, Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Chris Coons (D-DE), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), **Daniel Inouye (D-HI)**, John Kerry (D-MA), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Ranking Minority Member, Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Patty Murray (D-WA), Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Ranking Minority Member, Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Oversight Chair, Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

Founding principles

The founding Senators of the caucus stressed the importance of the ocean and the crucial role it plays on all aspects of life: an importance that extends not only past state, but also political party, lines.

Senator Snowe of Maine explained that "The Senate Oceans Caucus is a major step forward in our recognition of the significant environmental and economic roles played by our oceans, and through this coordinated bipartisan effort that centralizes key priorities from all of our stakeholders and industries, our caucus has the potential to speak in a loud and unified voice on behalf of our coastal resources, yielding significant economic and environmental benefits for us all."^[4]

Charter

The Caucus established a 4-part Charter.

- **Section 1**- establishes the caucus, and lists the founding Senators of the caucus.
- **Section 2**- States the mission of the caucus which is to enable further dialogue regarding coastal area and ocean policy. The section emphasizes the caucus' dedication to bipartisanship, cooperation, and education about current policy and scientific advancements.
- **Section 3**- lists responsibilities of caucus members to meet 4 times each session of congress, educate others on the vitality of comprehensive federal policy, work with the Oceans Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and to explore, and encourage the exploration of new policies.
- **Section 4**- addresses the leadership structure of the caucus, focussing strongly on bipartisanship, with actions requiring support of caucus members of both parties.



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Charter of the United States Senate Oceans Caucus

Reception

"This newly founded Senate Oceans Caucus is an important, bi-partisan group that will increase awareness and find common ground in responding to issues facing the oceans. The Caucus membership will work to ensure a sustainable, science-based, and efficient approach to the utilization of our ocean resources." ^[5] -Consortium for Ocean Leadership

The Press Conference following the inaugural meeting of the caucus included representatives from ocean and coastal organizations supporting their efforts, including the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA), the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), the National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing (NFRA), and Ocean Champions.^[6]

References

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External links

- Senator Begich outlining how the new bipartisan Senate Oceans Caucus will supplement the work of the Senate Commerce Committee's Oceans Subcommittee, in which he serves as Chairman. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxxVMYX3WEI/>)

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