

Today I would like to commend Chair Grijalva for his continued leadership on climate action and to express my support for the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act. This bill will unleash the incredible power of the ocean to capture and store carbon, helping us move closer to our climate goals. As Chair of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, I'm proud that it incorporates many of the recommendations from our Climate Crisis Action Plan. And as a Floridian, I have seen firsthand the impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels and increasingly extreme storms and weather. I am encouraged by the important progress made by the Natural Resources Committee in laying out a comprehensive framework for ocean climate action.

In particular, the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act recognizes the potential of "blue carbon" to mitigate climate change. This bill would take meaningful steps to protect and restore the ocean and wetland ecosystems that are so vital in capturing and storing carbon. Importantly, this legislation will protect at least 30% of our ocean by 2030. This is an ambitious goal, but an achievable one that will help mitigate both the climate and biodiversity crises that we face.

Protecting and restoring ocean and wetland ecosystems doesn't just increase their capacity to sequester carbon; it also makes coastal communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act improves coastal resiliency by promoting living shorelines, enhancing the Coastal Barrier Resource Act, and expanding natural infrastructure.

One of the most critical aspects of the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act is that it incorporates ocean-based energy production as part of the climate solution. It prohibits new oil and gas leasing in all areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, while promoting responsibly-sited offshore wind energy and other marine energy development.

We know the ocean is a crucial ally in the climate fight. We also know we need to protect it, as ocean ecosystems are already being harmed by climate change. The Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act will keep oceans healthy in the face of warming temperatures - by enhancing and improving research, forecasting, and mitigation of ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms. It also promotes climate-ready fisheries and provides investments in climate and fisheries management research.

These are just a few of the many climate solutions we can advance by passing the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act. This legislation will allow our ocean and coasts to mitigate climate change, while also protecting frontline communities and ensuring healthy, biodiverse marine ecosystems. I look forward to continuing to work with Chair Grijalva, as we advance meaningful, nature-based policies to fight the climate crisis.