



NPCA Position on Legislation before the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

June 22, 2021

Dear Representative,

Since 1919, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our more than 1.6 million members and supporters nationwide, I write to share our thoughts on H.R. 3764, the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, ahead of a legislative hearing held by the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee scheduled for June 22nd, 2021. H.R. 3764 is comprehensive legislation that builds on knowledge and recommendations from recent national and international scientific reports and includes components and themes of the ocean-focused bills also included in the hearing.

H.R. 3764 – Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act: NPCA strongly **supports** this legislation, which harnesses the power of oceans to provide solutions to the climate crisis. Rising temperatures, melting glaciers, flooding, shoreline erosion, sea-level rise, extreme storms, coral bleaching and more are impacting America’s national parks today, altering iconic landscapes, ecological processes, cultural resources, infrastructure assets and recreational opportunities. With 88 coastal parks in the National Park System covering more than ten percent of America’s coastline, national parks need to be part of the climate solution.

NPCA supports H.R. 3764 and the accompanying ocean-related bills that provide important steps to protect and restore the ecological integrity and resiliency of coastal national parks, where natural landscapes and historical and cultural structures are on the front lines of climate change impacts. This legislation will:

- **Substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** NPCA recognizes that H.R. 3764 calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by advocating for stricter emissions standards of vessels, increasing appropriately sited renewable energy sources and energy efficiency such as offshore wind energy, and preventing the expansion of offshore oil exploration and drilling.
- **Protect the ocean’s natural ability to store carbon and mitigate climate change, by conserving and restoring coastal “blue carbon” ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds and salt marshes.** NPCA prioritizes restoring “blue carbon” ecosystems such as Everglades and Biscayne National Parks, Cape Cod and Point Reyes National Seashores, and Gateway National Recreation



Area, and recognizes this legislation advances policies that enhance the ecological health of parks by restoring wetlands, mangroves and living shorelines to better withstand the worsening impacts of sea level rise and more intense storms.

- **Implement adaptation strategies to increase ocean protection resiliency to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. This includes strongly protecting at least 30 percent of the ocean in areas where marine wildlife can thrive, as well as promoting sustainable fisheries management, pollution reduction, ocean habitat restoration and ocean planning.** NPCA supports the goal of 30x30 and the creation of a 30x30 task force to focus on potential oceanic areas that deserve protection, building on the legacy of Presidents Bush and Obama to establish marine national monuments through the Antiquities Act to improve the health of national parks and the wildlife they support, particularly in sensitive habitats such as coral reefs which harbor the highest diversity of any ecosystem. For example, at Dry Tortugas and Channel Islands National Parks, scientists have found that fully protected marine reserves are contributing to bigger and more abundant sea life within protected areas.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Please contact Sarah Gaines Barmeyer at sbarmeyer@npca.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christina Hazard
Legislative Director