

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 29, 2019

The Honorable José Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholdt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholdt:

We write to request your continued support for marine debris removal and research efforts. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that the NOAA Marine Debris Program be funded at the full authorized level of \$10 million.

Every minute, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of plastic is dumped into our oceans. According to the United Nations, that's more than eight million metric tons a year. Plastic bottles, straws, grocery bags, cigarette butts, fishing gear, and abandoned vessels litter the ocean. Currents and atmospheric winds trap items in debris accumulation zones, also known as garbage patches.

Marine debris harms our coastal economies, endangers marine life, destroys important marine habitat, propagates invasive species, and creates hazardous conditions for the maritime industry. Tiny pieces of plastic, fiber, fragments, and microbeads also make their way into marine life, blocking digestive tracts, altering growth, and in some cases killing animals and marine organisms. We still don't know how long it takes for plastic to completely biodegrade. Estimates range from 450 years to never.

The health of our oceans reflects the health of our planet, and we must do more to keep garbage out of the ocean and off our shores. Last year, Congress unanimously passed the bipartisan Save Our Seas Act to reauthorize the NOAA Marine Debris Program. Fully funding the program at the authorized level of \$10 million will support reduction, prevention, and research activities.


The Marine Debris Program supports research and cleanup projects through partnerships with state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, industry, and academia. Additionally, federal investments support an emergency response program to address marine debris issues caused by natural disasters. Hurricanes and tsunami events can litter coastal communities with large materials like docks and derelict vessels that carry invasive species. Marine debris is a growing global crisis that requires collaborative work with partners from across the world.


Reducing, preventing, and researching marine debris is critical to our goal of protecting and preserving the integrity of our marine ecosystems. We request a total of \$10 million for the NOAA Marine Debris Program to support efforts to marine debris removal and research efforts.

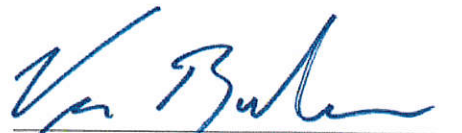
Thank you for consideration of our request.


Sincerely,


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Don Young
Member of Congress


Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress


Jared Huffman
Member of Congress


Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress


Alan Lowenthal
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Francis Rooney
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



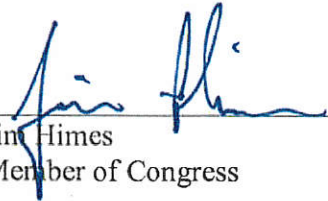
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



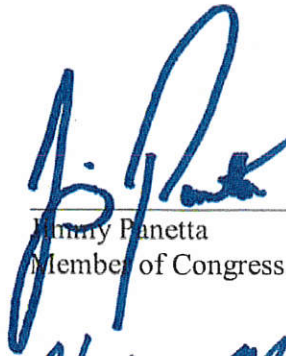
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



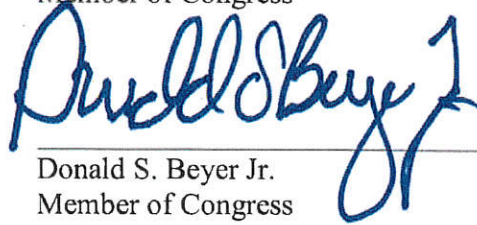
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



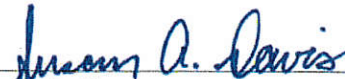
A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



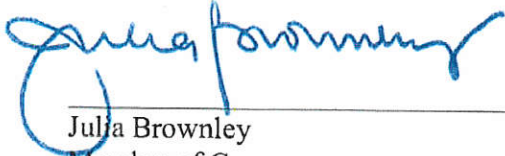
Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
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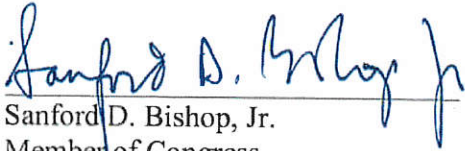
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress