

**Virtual Testimony for HNR Hearing on the Ocean Based Climate Solutions Act
Congresswoman Chellie Pingree**

H.R. 3160

June 22, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of the Ocean Based Climate Solutions Act. This legislation includes my bipartisan bill with Congressman Wittman, the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have advocated for the needs of coastal communities and those who use our working waterfronts. I am grateful to have a chance to discuss this bill with you today.

I know members of this Committee hear regularly from constituents who make their living from the water. Whether they are boatbuilders from the West Coast, seafood buyers and processors across America, recreational fishing guides in the Gulf of Mexico, or commercial fishermen and aquaculture business owners in New England, the refrain is the same: **water-dependent businesses from coast to coast need our help**. They want us to preserve access to the working waterfronts that make their livelihoods possible and keep our coastal economies thriving.

More than thirty thousand Mainers rely on marine-related industries for their livelihoods. In fact, in our state we refer to this as a "Heritage Industry" because it is so ingrained in the fabric of our state. Yet out of five thousand miles of coastline, just twenty miles of working waterfronts remain in my state.

Across the country, working waterfronts are rapidly disappearing due to heavy development pressure. When fishermen must grapple with the loss of wharves, processing facilities, and other essential infrastructure *in addition to* navigating the challenge of climate change, it threatens the very survival of coastal communities.

Congress can contribute to the great work that states are already doing by expanding access to funding and resources. We don't need to duplicate efforts, but we can provide more support for states to preserve coastal economies.

I have been proud to work across the aisle with my colleagues, including Congressman Wittman of Virginia, to create bipartisan solutions that can work for America's coastal communities.

This bill will help reverse a worrying trend of shrinking waterfronts, while simultaneously protecting jobs and preserving the character of our coastal communities.

It establishes a Working Waterfront Grant Program for waterfront preservation and sets up a Task Force within the Department of Commerce to identify and prioritize critical needs for our nation's working waterfronts.

Through the task force, the bill will also help communities identify and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis.

These programs are voluntary, so states can opt into the programming this bill would create. Through the creation of statewide working waterfront plans, each state can identify their own needs and create their own plans to address the unique challenges facing their working waterfronts.

It has been gratifying to hear so many proposals to solve the problems facing our coastal communities today. Working waterfronts are an integral part of our coastal economies, communities, and traditions. We must all do our part to ensure they survive into the future. I would welcome the opportunity for the Committee to move this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I yield back.