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U.S. government releases first-ever Ocean Climate Action Plan

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Environmental groups praise Ocean Climate Action Plan but warn implementation is key to success

On March 21, 2023, the Biden-Harris administration released its https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf) **Ocean Climate Action Plan** (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf), the first-ever government-wide strategy to maximize the power of the ocean to combat climate change.

The Ocean Climate Action Plan outlines new actions on the Administration's ocean-climate priorities, including efforts to advance climate solutions, promote environmental justice, support healthy communities and ensure a robust and sustainable ocean economy. It covers eight priority areas and contains over 200 specific recommendations to "advance immediate, transformational steps to protect ocean health and address the climate crisis."

President Biden will also direct the Secretary of Commerce to consider initiating a new National Marine Sanctuary designation within the next 30 days to protect all U.S. waters around the Pacific Remote Islands. If completed, the new sanctuary would ensure the U.S. will reach the President's goal of conserving at least 30 percent of ocean waters under American jurisdiction by 2030.



The Ocean Climate Action Plan is the first-ever government-wide strategy to maximize the power of the ocean to combat climate change. Photo by [Matthew Barra \(https://www.pexels.com/photo/body-of-water-wave-812958/\)](https://www.pexels.com/photo/body-of-water-wave-812958/).

“This Ocean Climate Action Plan is the first comprehensive approach that the U.S. has taken to leveraging the power of the ocean in the fight against climate change,” said Jean Flemma, Director of Ocean Defense Initiative, one of the organizations that has long called for a government-wide ocean climate strategy. “The plan should inspire a ripple effect of powerful climate actions from coast to coast that will slash emissions and help frontline communities.”

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Spanning 70 percent of the planet, the ocean offers a wealth of opportunities to mitigate climate impacts, with the potential to provide **one-fifth of the emissions reductions** (<https://www.wri.org/news/release-ocean-based-climate-action-could-deliver-fifth-emissions-cuts->

needed-limit-temperature) needed to curb global temperature rise. Although environmental organizations and ocean advocates praise the plan, Flemma cautions that it is “only as strong as its implementation.”

The Ocean Climate Action Plan comes a day after a new **United Nations report** (<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>), made clear that human activities, principally through greenhouse gas emissions, have unequivocally caused global warming, driving weather and climate disasters across the globe.

Download the **Ocean Climate Action Plan here** (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf).

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