

QFRs for Dr. Jane Lubchenco following November 17, 2020 hearing entitled “*Ocean Climate Action: Solutions to the Climate Crisis*”

House Committee on Natural Resources Committee

1. **Question from Rep. Velázquez** 1. Dr. Lubchenco, in 2012 Superstorm Sandy tore through New York City and research shows that sea level rise played a major role in driving Sandy’s surge, resulting in severe flooding in the region. Consequentially, New York City experienced an estimated \$19 billion in damages and lost economic activity. To better prepare coastal communities from future catastrophes, I’ve introduced the National Sea Level Risk Analysis Act, which is included in H.R. 8632. Can you explain how a National Coastal Data Information System will better protect and prepare businesses, governments, and citizens from current and future flooding risks?

**Lubchenco response:** Thank you, Rep. Velázquez, for your leadership to prepare and enhance the resilience of coastal communities to climate and other changes. I agree with you that integrated, user-friendly information is absolutely needed for smart planning and action. When I was the NOAA Administrator, and understanding the grave threats posed by coastal inundation and inland flooding, NOAA formed a new partnership with USGS and the Army Corps of Engineers, each of whom had one piece of the larger puzzle needed for accurate, more unified and comprehensive understanding of flood risks. That program was called Integrated Water Resources Science and Services (IWRSS (pronounced iris). The goal was to integrate and harmonize information across these agencies and provide one-stop shopping to communities, businesses and states. Since I am no longer at NOAA, I can’t provide an update on the state of IWRSS, but I suspect you’ve already investigated that. It strikes me as one element needed to provide your and other vulnerable communities with better information to plan and to act. I also draw your attention to the work done by Climate Central to create user-friendly risk zone maps, GIS layers and more [https://ss2.climatecentral.org/#12/40.7298/-74.0070?show=satellite&projections=0-K14\\_RCP85-SLR&level=5&unit=feet&pois=hide](https://ss2.climatecentral.org/#12/40.7298/-74.0070?show=satellite&projections=0-K14_RCP85-SLR&level=5&unit=feet&pois=hide). In short, although there are good elements in place for a robust and useful coastal data information system, a truly functional, comprehensive system does not exist and is urgently needed. Businesses, communities, citizens and governments need to plan and for that, they need accurate information, a better understanding of risk and tradeoffs to evaluate options and make smart decisions. I applaud your focus on this topic.

2. **Questions from Rep. Cox** 1. Like many of my colleagues, I come from a landlocked district – but that doesn’t mean that we don’t all benefit from ocean-based climate solutions. The High Level Panel for the Sustainable Economy’s report on the Ocean as a Solution for Climate Change finds full implementation of ocean-based climate solutions could deliver one-fifth (up to 21 percent) of the annual greenhouse gas emissions cuts the world needs by 2050 to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius, which the IPCC says we must strive to do. How does the Chairman’s bill address their findings? Are there any areas we need to improve or expand upon?

**Lubchenco response.** Thank you, Rep. Cox, for drawing attention to the overarching importance to all Americans of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as rapidly as possible. The Chairman's bill notes a number of ways in which ocean-based activities can help achieve that goal. I would underscore the importance of using *all* of the tools in our ocean toolbox: already highlighted in the bill are protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems, Marine Protected Areas that are fully to highly protected, ocean renewable energy, and making fisheries more energy efficient. I would add making ports more energy efficient and decarbonizing shipping to that list – at the national as well as international scale. Working in close collaboration with other countries on all of these issues will leverage more, more efficient, and smarter actions. In addition to more aggressive actions to reduce emissions and thus slow down the rate of climate change, parallel efforts are needed to adapt to changes already underway. A robust National Ocean Policy would be a nice complement to help integrate actions across sectors and issues, and to enable smart planning at the regional scale, for both mitigation and adaptation.

#### Questions for the Record from Republican Members

3. **Questions from Rep. Bishop** 1. During the hearing you seemed to agree that state management of fisheries in state waters should not be pre-empted by a federal regime. Could you please confirm that position in writing?

**Lubchenco response.** Thank you, Rep. Bishop, for the chance to clarify my position on this issue. Both states and the federal government should play key roles in managing fisheries. As you are aware, there are various agreements between different states and the federal government to allocate responsibility for specific fisheries, in particular those where the fish move back and forth from state waters to federal waters. I noted in the hearing that in my experience, although federally managed fisheries have improved significantly through time and are generally well managed, many state-managed fisheries are not well resourced and do not have a good handle on the status of their stocks. I was not commenting on who should manage different stocks, but only noting that without adequate resources, it is difficult for many states to manage their fisheries well.