

May 19, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science,
& Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, &
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

The undersigned organizations, on behalf of our millions of members and supporters around the United States, write in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Rick Spinrad to be the next Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

NOAA enriches life through science. From daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings, and climate monitoring to fisheries management, coastal restoration and supporting marine commerce, NOAA's products and services are critical to communities and the lives of individuals across the country. As our ocean and climate continue to change, the agency has and will continue to be an essential player in better understanding how those changes impact communities and how we can continue to protect the world's precious natural resources. Whether they realize it or not, everyone depends on a strong and well-managed NOAA.

Dr. Spinrad's robust scientific expertise and track record of federal leadership make him supremely qualified to lead NOAA into the future. He has intricate knowledge of the agency, having previously held roles as NOAA Chief Scientist and head of the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, where his accomplishments include the development of the nation's first set of ocean research priorities and the revamping of NOAA's research enterprise. As an internationally recognized scientist, he previously served as the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and has significant experience as an academic leader, having had faculty appointments at three universities and previous service as Vice President of Research at Oregon State University.

Importantly, he recognizes the opportunity that currently exists to bring out the best of NOAA by strengthening the agency's science mission, reasserting NOAA's critical roles on climate and marine conservation, and building the NOAA of tomorrow. For the last four years, the agency has lacked a Senate-confirmed Administrator, creating an executive leadership vacuum. The agency desperately needs major investments in its people, facilities, infrastructure, legal footing, and data and information architecture. Most importantly, NOAA needs to invest in rebuilding its reputation and trust with the people, reestablish its reputation as a bastion of scientific integrity and science-based decision-making, and become a national leader, driving policies for environmental justice by championing the needs of underserved communities.

Dr. Spinrad is the right person to lead and build the NOAA of tomorrow and improve our nation's efforts to understand, respond to, and prepare for changes in our ocean, coasts, Great Lakes, atmosphere, and climate. We encourage the immediate consideration of his nomination and urge your support.

Sincerely,

**Ocean Conservancy - Center for the Blue Economy, Middlebury Institute – Oceana - Joint
Ocean Commission Initiative - Natural Resources Defense Council – Earthjustice -
National Ocean Protection Coalition - National Wildlife Federation - Inland Ocean
Coalition – GreenLatinos - Healthy Ocean Coalition - Monterey Bay Aquarium - TAO
(Tethra Advisors and Officers)-the Blue Economy and Blue Technology Consultancy - MIT
Alumni for Climate Action - National Parks Conservation Association- Environmental
Defense Fund**

CC: Members of the United States Senate