

SEEC Nature and Oceans Task Force

Focus: Creating a space for SEEC to convene with Administration officials and experts to learn about and advance efforts that harness the power of our public lands and waters in the fight against the climate crisis.

Co-Chairs: SEEC Co-Chair Doris Matsui (CA-06) and Natural Resources Parks Subcommittee Chair Joe Neguse (CO-02), representing both coastal and inland states.

Members: Representatives Chellie Pingree (ME-01), Alan Lowenthal (CA-47), Jared Huffman (CA-02), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), John Sarbanes (MD-03), Salud Carbajal (CA-24), Ted Lieu (CA-33), Derek Kilmer (WA-06)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

➤ Why a SEEC Nature and Oceans Task Force?

As you know, we must reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. Extreme weather events fueled by the climate crisis are not only dangerous for humans, but they are also devastating ecosystems. Further, our nation also faces a nature and biodiversity crisis, losing a football field worth of natural area every 30 seconds due to human development.

As Secretary Deb Haaland stated in April of 2021, “achieving net-zero by 2050 will not be possible without nature”. Similarly, the National Academy of Sciences reported that natural climate solutions (NCS) – the conservation, restoration, and management of our lands and waters – can help combat these twin threats and deliver up to a third of the emission reductions needed by 2030¹. The organization also found that many NCS can be much more cost-effective than many emerging technical solutions. In addition, some NCS can be effective immediately because they do not require technological innovation—playing a crucial role in the drawdown of greenhouse gases today, while long-term measures are developed and implemented.

Beyond carbon sequestration, NCS deliver ecosystem benefits such as clean air and water and reduced coastal erosion and play an important part in disaster mitigation and environmental justice. They also help tackle pollution, drought, urban heat island effects, storms, and hurricanes. If implemented appropriately and with science and community-led approaches, they will increase access to nature for communities nationwide and yield health and infrastructure benefits.

In light of the dire findings of the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), our nation must take immediate action to prioritize robust natural climate solutions and harness the power of our lands and waters to lower the impact of greenhouse gas emissions and protect our communities and natural environment. SEEC’s Nature and Oceans Task Force aims to become a strong partner with congressional leaders, the Biden Administration, and community stakeholders in this

¹ <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645>

mission.

➤ What are your goals for the year?

We want to give SEEC members the opportunity to learn about the crucial role that our lands and ocean will play in the climate crisis. This includes supporting, advancing, and actively engaging with member and committee priorities and the Administration's "America the Beautiful" initiative to conserve and restore 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.

Legislative efforts supported through this task force will include but are not limited to ocean climate action and coastal protection; nature equity; reforestation, urban forestry, old forest protections, and science-based reforestation and forest management; biodiversity and ecosystem conservation; and initiatives to advance tribal sovereignty and incorporate the use of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

➤ What events will you be planning?

From meetings with agency heads such as Interior Secretary Haaland to conversations with scientists and international experts, as well as meetings with tribal leaders and climate justice advocates, we want to give SEEC members and staff the opportunity to engage directly with stakeholders at the forefront of natural climate solutions and environmental justice.