

**United States Senator Ernest F. Hollings
Welcoming Remarks**

**U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's Southeast Regional Meeting
College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina
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Thank you and welcome to commission members. We have a full complement of Commissioners who have come all the way here to my hometown. All of us are extremely proud of Charleston. We call it America's most historic city. I am sure Paul Sandifer is telling you this every time you meet, but we have got the first drugstore, first chamber of commerce, first museum, first art gallery, and you can go right on down the line. You are right here at the first municipal college, 1771. It's the fifth oldest of all higher educational institutions, the fifth oldest in the entire nation. It has quite a history behind it. And the truth of the matter is, recalling Jonathan Daniels, the old Secretary of the Navy, and his observation on the city of Charleston. He said it is one of the most unique cities with two groups of people down there. He said they have got that one crowd that never wore shoes before, and then they have got the other group, when they look at you; they make you feel like you never wore shoes before. As one of the shoes variety, let me welcome you and say it has been a long hard road.

We had an auspicious beginning under a South Carolinian, Dr. Julius Stratton, the Provost of MIT at the time, chaired a commission 35 years ago, when I first came to the United States Senate, and produced his formative report. In the Senate Commerce Committee, we immediately instituted the Oceans and Atmosphere Subcommittee, and started bringing in witnesses. We got Jacques Cousteau, all of the real experts at that time -- Bob Ballard was too young to come -- and what happened was, we created the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, giving us Coastal Zone Management, Sea Grant, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, National Marine Sanctuaries Act -- you can go right on down and list the Ocean Dumping Act, Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and others.

But about 20 years ago, we began to have troubles. We got in a bunch of land lubbers, including the chairman of the committee. They abolished the Oceans and Atmospheric Subcommittee and the National Ocean Policy Study which was an inner working group of all of the committees in the Senate, ceased to meet. Today when we meet, it just reminds me of what Thor Heyerdahl told us -- he said on the Kon Tiki, that first trip across the ocean, he dipped his toothbrush in the ocean and brushed his teeth, but by second trip or two, he couldn't dip his toothbrush the ocean without getting dirty, the ocean was so polluted, and today it is more polluted than 30 or 35 years ago. Ninety-five percent is still unexplored. As we all know, we are losing the coral reefs, 56 species of fish stocks are overfished, and we could go right on down the list.

It took four years just hammering away both sides of the Capitol to get the Ocean Act passed and the State Department and the Defense Department and the oil industry were in opposition, but we finally got it together and have done all of this hard work. I want to tell those in the audience that we have got the most outstanding commission I know together and working. But we have an even more outstanding commission here than on

the Stratton Commission. You will never find anyone that will get all of the disciplines with expertise in the areas of oceans, the coastal zone, land management, the environment, development and research. The only one individual that I know that could get them all together is this distinguished Chairman here, Admiral Watkins. You have a wonderful team. I don't know of any group better, and so it is really encouraging to see the approach you are using, namely going around the country not only listening but creating an interest and telling everybody now we are awake and alive and we are going forward and we are going to develop a real policy and make the tough decisions in that policy. Don't make compromises. We politicians will compromise what we have to compromise. You all find what is needed to be found. And with that said, welcome, welcome.

Thank you very much.