

Welcome
The Honorable Joseph P. Riley
Mayor of Charleston
(Based on Meeting Transcript)

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's
Southeast Regional Meeting
College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina
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Good morning Admiral Watkins, members of the commission and ladies and gentlemen. I promise my remarks will be brief. It is indeed a very great group that welcomes the mayor of the city in which they are meeting to speak to them. Those things can run on. We can get carried away talking about our communities, and I could easily do that here for Charleston. But I will speak with you very briefly both as a mayor of the city and as a member of the Pew Oceans Commission.

First of all, I want to tell you how proud we are to have you here in Charleston, and for the first meeting to be held here. We are honored by that. We believe that Charleston, with its beauty and with its development and with its connection, the historic connection with the ocean, is a very appropriate place. We are so proud of our Charleston connections. Dr. Paul Sandifer, a dear friend and a colleague of yours, has a national reputation. We were delighted that he was selected to be on the commission. And, of course, we are so proud of Senator Hollings and the senator's sponsorship of our national oceans policy through this new commission. And you all know Senator Hollings from your own perspective. Most of us know him as a thoughtful and a highly respected member of the United States Senate. We know all of that. But I always want people to know Senator Hollings when he was our governor. He was perhaps the greatest governor in our state's history and at a very interesting time. From 1958 to 1962, his leadership was leadership in economic development, education and in race relations. His courageous work to make South Carolina have a different experience than many southern states had was a remarkable part of his leadership heritage, and I want to remind people about that as well.

I was delighted to be asked to serve on the Pew Commission. In first thinking about it, the fact that the oceans are so large and that this would be such a challenge and a responsibility, was intimidating. Perhaps, reasonably, a human instinct would be to leave it to others because of its size and its scope. Perhaps some thought that there really isn't a whole lot you can do to impact it. Well, what we all know and understand, of course, is that it is our deep responsibility. As the *New York Times* wrote in its editorial a few weeks ago calling attention to the troubled seas, the great pressures that human beings have put on the oceans, the only oceans that our planet has and the extra increase in the pressures make it incumbent on everyone, on every citizen, every human being that occupies the planet earth to accept the responsibility for the oceans and their health.

As the Pew Commission has met around the country, we have heard from lots of people, from scientists. I know you will hear from Dana Beach and Don Boesch, who have also presented very helpful papers to us, and I guess the reason I was asked to be on the commission was to give it a representative from a local government along the coast. So a fair amount of our time has been working on the issue of coastal development. I chair

that committee for the commission, and there are two thoughts that have come from that, and this will be very brief.

The first is in the area of the increased human occupation of the coast. It is irreversible and will continue. We all know that the numbers of people who will be living within 25 miles of the coast is relatively irreversible. It will continue to for obvious reasons. So the recognition that what happens on the land adjacent to the coast and impacts of that on all that feed and acknowledge the coast are obvious, and it is so important that we face a long-range impact, understanding, and responsibility of what happens there. Coastal development plans, regulations, smart growth, environmental protection actions, and so much have to happen and increasingly so.

In addition to that, I have become convinced that when we work on problems like this, we really have to force ourselves to look much further than is easy to look. Not 10 years and not 50 years, but a couple of hundred years, and we have to do that. I realize that the best smart growth initiatives, the best development rules and guidelines, if every developable acre is developed, we will never be sufficient to keep from overwhelming the environment of the coast that nourishes and feeds our oceans. So, I believe strongly and I believe our commission strongly recommends that collectively as a national policy we work to take more land off the table.

I often wonder what America would be like if Teddy Roosevelt -- rather than loving to hunt and to chill out in the western part of America -- if the coast had been his passion, if our country would have acquired and preserved and put into public conservation protection huge amounts of the coast of our continent. I think we have to commit to try to do that. Obviously so much of it has been developed.

One of the important things that has happened in my lifetime has been the creation of the ACE River Basin, which I know you are familiar with the impact of those rivers. I flew over the Atlantic yesterday. The day was beautiful. You could see eight states from 50 miles away and the recognition that relatively little is going to happen on the land for all the years to come, and that is the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto, and that huge area that it enhances, nourishes and feeds the ocean, that that would be protected. So I hope that we can increase a national policy for the federal, state, local, private, charitable commitments to try not to take more land off the table forever.

And the second is arguably more simple than that, but it keeps coming up when we meet. It came up when we met in Hawaii, when we met in Maine, or wherever, and that is the importance of education. And it is so easy to quickly yawn when someone mentions that, but it keeps coming up. The fact is that we as a culture from the earliest age need to understand the importance of our actions and the relationship of our actions to the environment and to the oceans. We worked very hard to create the South Carolina Aquarium. We are so proud of it, and I am so happy that you were there last night. All of the years it took to design and develop it and raise some and all of that, and people would say, you know, "Why does Charleston need another tourist attraction?" I said, "It is not a tourist attraction. It is a powerful environmental education facility." That is what it is. Talk with Congressman Allen in Maine, who is interested in developing an aquarium in Maine. It is important to do the same thing, trace the movement of the water through that part of North America. That is why we built the aquarium, so that people who go there -- I challenged the designers and the exhibit people and all of us that I wanted everybody who went to the aquarium to leave with a

new set of environmental responses, to have a deeper understanding of the impact of all that happens on the land and all of the plants and animals that depend on it and their relationship with the oceans.

And so I feel that if we can increase our commitment to education, we will help protect the oceans as well. We are obviously honored, as I said, that you are here in Charleston. And I had a business person move to Charleston many years ago, and he and his wife have been so generous and supportive of the community. He could have lived anywhere. I asked him one time why he chose Charleston. He said he wanted to live on the coast, and they studied North America, and they had two criteria. They wanted a place with an active cultural life, and wanted to live in a place where there was a clean estuary. And I thought that was so interesting, and the more I thought about it, it was so profound. And that is our responsibility -- this estuary and this ocean that humans inherited, it's our great and profound responsibility to keep it and protect it and preserve it and to pass it on to future generations.

Thanks for being here. Thank you for serving on the commission, and we of the Pew obviously look forward to presenting to you our report and working with you to help our ideas and your ideas come into fruition.