

June 28, 2024

Dear Tribal Leader,

I write on behalf of the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy to invite you to a Tribal Consultation on the Federal government's plan for marine carbon dioxide removal (CDR) research.

Marine CDR refers to a variety of approaches to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere with the assistance of ocean processes. Scientific assessments report that, in addition to deep and rapid emissions reductions, some kinds of CDR will likely be needed to meet society's goals to limit climate change, and marine CDR is attracting growing attention. However, while some marine CDR approaches have shown promise, none are considered ready for large-scale or commercial deployment. Significant questions remain about their effectiveness, durability, and possible impacts, both positive and negative. More research, including carefully-monitored and well-regulated field trials, is urgently needed to resolve these questions before any decisions can be made about potential future deployment.

During this government-to-government consultation, we will discuss a summary of the draft version of the marine CDR research strategy that is in development by the marine CDR Fast-Track Action Committee (FTAC).<sup>1</sup> This draft incorporates input we received from Tribal Nations during informal Tribal engagement sessions held in May 2024. The summary of the draft is attached here. The draft will be revised to incorporate feedback from Tribal Nations following the consultation.

We welcome feedback regarding all aspects of the research plan and marine carbon dioxide removal (CDR) research more broadly. The FTAC does not have authority to permit or fast-track any specific project. This consultation is not connected to any specific proposed project.

**The Tribal consultation will take place on July 31, from 2-4 pm EST.** The session will take place virtually. The slides shared during the Tribal Consultation will contain additional information regarding the draft marine CDR research plan and will be shared via email with all those who have registered one week prior to the consultation. Please register in advance at: <https://pitc.webex.com/weblink/register/r34ed90762067cc0e20548570ea22346a>.

In addition to or instead of joining the Tribal Consultation above, you may provide written input by August 14, 2024. Please send your written submissions to Tricia Light, Ocean Policy Fellow at the Office of Science and Technology Policy, at [Tricia.M.Light@ostp.eop.gov](mailto:Tricia.M.Light@ostp.eop.gov), and identify your submission as "Marine CDR Tribal and Indigenous Input." If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Light by email or at (202) 881-7242.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Science and Technology Council established the Marine Carbon Dioxide Fast-Track Action Committee in October 2023. The Committee is co-chaired by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For more information, see the Committee's [Charter](#) and [Federal Register Notice](#).

Please note that formal Tribal consultations are only open to Tribal leaders of Federally-recognized Tribes or Alaska Native Corporations, or designees of Tribal leaders. To that end, please clearly identify yourself or your designee when registering for the Tribal Consultation.

Thank you for sharing your insight, knowledge, and ideas with us as we work to advance ocean-based climate solutions. We hope that you will join us for this important discussion, and we greatly value your participation and input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane Lubchenco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" being more prominent and the last name "Lubchenco" following in a similar style.

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.  
Deputy Director for Climate and Environment  
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal Fast Track Action Committee:**

**Draft Content for Tribal Consultation**

**Note:** This content is intended only for Tribal leaders of Federally-recognized Tribes or Alaska Native Corporations, or designees of Tribal leaders.

The marine Carbon Dioxide Removal Fast Track Action Committee (FTAC) is creating a research strategy designed to enable safeguarded, scaled research to investigate the potential efficacy, risks, and benefits of marine CDR approaches. The strategy is guided by the objective in the U.S. Ocean Climate Action Plan<sup>1</sup> to build sufficient knowledge about the efficacy and tradeoffs of different methods of marine CDR to guide deployment decisions by 2030. The FTAC is currently drafting a research strategy that highlights key outstanding research questions, provides information regarding the permitting process for marine CDR field trials, and recommends next steps that the Federal government should undertake.

The FTAC is considering the following gaps and needs that may be included in the research strategy for the federal government to address:

- **Outline terms for future development of a Code of Conduct** for responsible and ethical marine CDR research. This Code of Conduct should be developed with input from the public and in consultation with Tribal Nations. The FTAC may elaborate on specific components and research principles to be incorporated into this Code of Conduct, including the following: engagement with local communities, environmental justice, consideration of impacts on people and ecosystems, collaborative stewardship, data sharing and transparency, and scientific integrity. Tribal sovereignty and State, Territorial, regional, and local management authorities must always be respected.
- **Support a sequential approach to mCDR research** in which field trials are informed by modeling, laboratory research, and social science. Field trials, when merited, should only be as large as needed to answer key research questions. Such an approach would be designed to advance sound science, ecosystem health, and public trust as mCDR efforts progress from theory to field trials.
- **Consider designating certain areas of the ocean as priorities for mCDR research**, and identify the regulatory processes needed to establish these areas. Locations might be selected according to a number of factors, including coastal and oceanographic characteristics, availability of relevant expertise, institutional knowledge, and baseline ecosystem data, physical infrastructure, and community support.
- **Prioritize research on potential effects on ecosystems and people**, including on species with particular cultural and economic significance. Potential impacts to

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<sup>1</sup> Ocean Policy Committee. (2023). Ocean Climate Action Plan.  
[https://www.whitehouse.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan\\_Final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf).

## Draft, Deliberative, Pre-decisional

communities—both positive and negative—should be considered from the outset of mCDR research.

- **Expand ocean observations** and facilitate reliable and accurate measuring, monitoring, reporting, and verification of marine CDR efforts. The plan may encourage researchers to make data freely available, particularly information that shows consequences or benefits to local communities.
- **Outline potential criteria for the prioritization** of Federal resources for marine CDR research. These criteria may include possible environmental risks, social impacts, likelihood of effective and long-lasting carbon removal, co-benefits to people and ecosystems, and resource requirements.
- **Develop a detailed guide to permitting marine CDR field trials in the United States** to assist individuals in navigating the Federal permitting process, increase communications, and clarify key requirements.
- **Consider the development of multisector, regional marine CDR research hubs** to bring together the interdisciplinary expertise and place-based knowledge required for productive research. Hubs could also foster the formation of trusting, long-term relationships between researchers and community members.
- **Form an Interagency Working Group on mCDR** to guide implementation of this strategy and facilitate continued coordination and collaboration within the Federal government.