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N E W S R E L E A S E

**For Details, Contact:** Mike Dunmyer, Executive Director  
Phone: 571-970-6827 Fax: 703-229-4103  
Email: [mike@oceanchampions.org](mailto:mike@oceanchampions.org)

## Ocean Champions Endorses Congresswomen Capps and Ros-Lehtinen

### National Marine Sanctuary Caucus Co-Chairs Deliver Bi-Partisan Strength for Ocean Conservation

Washington, D.C. – June 8, 2010 – Ocean Champions, which works to build political power for the oceans by helping to elect pro-ocean candidates to the U.S. Congress is proud to announce its endorsement of Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL).

"Congresswoman Capps and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen show that support for ocean conservation is alive and well on both coasts," said David Wilmot, Ph.D., Ocean Champions' President and Co-Founder. "Their partnership in co-founding the National Marine Sanctuary Caucus in 2006 shows that good things can come from bi-partisan collaboration."

The National Marine Sanctuary Caucus works to strengthen the National Marine Sanctuary Act, and to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to preserve existing sanctuaries for future generations. The sanctuary system currently protects 150,000 square miles of coastal and open ocean areas. Congresswomen Capps and Ros-Lehtinen are being presented today with a Leadership Award from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation that recognizes their commitment and contribution.

In addition to her leadership on marine sanctuaries, Congresswoman Capps has been a strong and dedicated champion on a broad range of ocean issues. In the 111th Congress, she sponsored and passed legislation to protect sensitive coastal and estuarine areas, as well as a bill to establish a national integrated ocean and coastal observing system. Congresswoman Capps has pushed for protection of threatened animals, such as sharks, sea otters, and marine turtles. She also co-sponsored the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act, which passed the House, and co-led (with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse) a successful effort to establish an independent commission to investigate the BP oil spill in the Gulf.

Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen consistently supports important ocean initiatives. She co-sponsored the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia bill and the Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization, which also passed the House. Like her Marine Sanctuary Caucus co-chair, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen has publicly supported the establishment of a National Ocean Policy to protect, maintain and restore healthy oceans. Recently, she has pushed for accountability from BP and the Minerals Management Service for their role in the Gulf oil spill, and has co-sponsored the Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act.

Given the ocean's importance to their coastal districts, voters in California and Florida could not ask for better candidates than Congresswomen Capps and Ros-Lehtinen.

*Ocean Champions is the only nonprofit political organization that endorses pro-ocean Congressional candidates and lobbies members of Congress on behalf of the oceans. To learn more about Ocean Champions or any of the candidates endorsed by Ocean Champions, visit [www.oceanchampions.org](http://www.oceanchampions.org).*