United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 2012

Senator Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you know, in 2011 a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, causing almost 16,000 deaths and 6,000 injuries, and damaging and destroying numerous facilities. As a result of the disaster, a large amount of marine debris washed into the ocean and has begun to reach U.S. shores. For example, this summer there was an estimated 600 pounds of marine debris per mile in Yakutat, Alaska; approximately 50 metric tons of debris has been collected near the Hawaiian islands; and a dock recently reached the shore in Oregon. While the Department of Commerce has devoted some limited resources to collect data and reduce possible impacts of this debris, the majority of debris is not expected to reach U.S. waters and shorelines until 2013-2015 and more action is needed.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released RP9580.202, which outlined the Debris Removal Authorities of Federal Agencies. We believe that this matter also requires the attention of numerous federal departments and agencies and an interagency task force must be established to plan for the effects of this debris and ensure respective departments and agencies budget for their responsibilities relating to the debris. To that end, we respectfully request the Committee include $20 million for tsunami debris cleanup in affected states as well as the following language in the next appropriations bill drafted by your Committee.

> *The Committee is concerned about the lack of coordination and planning being done by the Administration to prepare for and respond to marine debris from the 2011 Japanese tsunami. Within 60 days of enactment, the Office of Management and Budget shall report to the Committee on how the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, State, and Transportation are working together to prepare for and respond to this debris, the proposed federal budget for that work, and how Departments are coordinating among themselves and with affected nations, states, tribes, and local governments regarding that work. Any additional statutory authorities should also be identified in the report.*

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator