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The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Japan Tsunami Marine Debris

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, on March 11, 2011, a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, causing almost 16,000 deaths and 6,000 injuries, and destroying and damaging numerous facilities. As a result of the disaster, a large amount of marine debris washed into the ocean and is beginning to reach U.S. shores. While I understand that NOAA is leading efforts to collect data, assess the debris, and reduce possible impacts to our natural resources and coastal communities, I have already seen impacts of this debris in Alaska while touring coastal areas and can confirm that more action is needed. It is essential that your Administration establish a plan on how the United States will prepare for and recover from this debris as it reaches our waters and shores.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released RP9580.202 that outlined the Debris Removal Authorities of Federal Agencies. Many of these agencies should be involved in preparing for and recovering from the Japan Tsunami Debris. Thus, I respectfully request that the White House establish and lead an interagency council that includes the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, State, and Transportation and affected states. I ask that you develop a plan for addressing Japan Tsunami Marine Debris and provide that report to Congress. If additional statutory authorities or federal funding are required to address this debris, I respectfully request that information as well.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

cc: U.S. Department of Agriculture
201 Fourteenth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20250

U.S. Department of Commerce
Fourteenth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street SW, Mail Stop 0501
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U.S. Department of Interior
Mail Stop 6242
1849 C Street, NW
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U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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