

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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DIVISION OF OCEAN SCIENCES
CHEMICAL OCEANOGRAPHY PROGRAM

4 April 2007

Dr. Jean-Pierre Gattuso
Coordination Office
European Project on Ocean Acidification (EPOCA)

Dear Jean-Pierre:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the development of EPOCA as a timely and important strategic research initiative.

Chronic acidification is without doubt the single most disturbing of numerous phenomena that characterize the changing chemistry of the world ocean. Throughout Phanerozoic time the ocean has been the largest and most dependably responsive buffered geochemical system at the Earth's surface. When the capacity of this system to regulate its acidity and alkalinity begins to falter – as we know it is doing now -- every educated person, every leader in the international political arena, and every professional man or woman charged with the responsibility of understanding and caring for marine environmental resources must take a stand to react responsibly. Accordingly, I congratulate you and your other colleagues in EPOCA for championing this cause in the EU scientific community and for working to develop strong and effective collaborations with colleagues in the U.S. and other countries around the world. A world-wide initiative to understand and manage acidification of the sea simply cannot succeed without the EU playing a central role in international scientific leadership.

In the Chemical Oceanography Program at the U.S. National Science Foundation, promotion of research into the root causes, mechanisms, and geochemical and ecological implications of ocean acidification has quickly risen to the status of Number One Priority. Other programs in the Division of Ocean Sciences are also responding to the call to arms from the U.S. research community. All of us here are well aware that international partnerships in funding, in the coordination of specific research efforts, in the sharing of seagoing platforms, and in the production and sharing of data of the very highest quality are essential to making progress on this environmental problem of first-order importance.

Obviously, we enthusiastically endorse the creation and maintenance of EPOCA and will do whatever we can to assure that the U.S. research effort in ocean acidification is well coordinated and fully cooperative with that of our EU colleagues in EPOCA and elsewhere.

I congratulate you and my other colleagues in EPOCA for taking this important step forward.

Sincerely,



Donald L. Rice, Director
Chemical Oceanography Program

cc: H. L. Clark
S. Doney
R. Feely
J. A. Yoder