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**Sea Bed User and Developer Group<sup>1</sup>, Marine Conservation Society,  
RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and WWF  
Joint Statement on Marine Conservation  
October 2012**

We continue to support the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and their provisions for marine conservation and achieving sustainable development of our seas. Our organisations are working closely with Government to ensure:-

- the designation of an Ecologically Coherent Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around the UK
- the recognition that marine industries participating in SUDG can play a major role in economic growth and the sustainable management of marine resources
- proportionate approaches to marine regulation
- the establishment of marine planning to encompass all sea users and sectors, basing resource use decisions on an understanding of the ecosystem, its limits and Government Policy.

To achieve this, we are committed to working together to look for synergies between the delivery of these marine objectives and solutions throughout the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment process and looking for genuine 'win-wins' wherever possible. To enable this, however, we believe that Government must act to ensure that:-

- a fully representative and ecologically well managed coherent network of UK MPAs, which allows appropriate development, is designated as soon as possible
- clear and practical guidance is available to assist all those involved in the approvals process
- information we have about the marine environment is increasingly used to develop risk based and proportionate approaches to meeting the needs of industry and the environment
- there is sufficient capacity within regulators and agencies to ensure that marine licences can be delivered without unnecessary delays
- site monitoring and enforcement is effective once sites are designated and that the evidence produced is also used to assist potential new developments.

To achieve this objectively needs a clear commitment from Government to increase our baseline understanding of the environment and the potential impacts of industry while providing clear and practical guidance for all involved in marine development and management. A more risk based approach will also ensure that we do not use the existing situation as a reason to delay making informed decisions for both environmental protection and marine developments.

This is an important time for both marine conservation and marine industry. We are all prepared to play our part on delivering the sustainability the Marine and Coastal Act promised, but we need delivery from Government to ensure better protection of marine assets and speedy and clear guidance to ensure that development can and does take place.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sea Bed User and Developer Group is an informal grouping of industry sectors whose participants have a common interest in sustainable development within the UK's marine environment. The Group is funded by The Crown Estate to align seabed user groups across the UK to work positively with Government to prepare shared understanding and approaches to marine management. Organisations involved include sectors whose members require marine licenses for construction and operation include British Ports Association, United Kingdom Major Ports Association, British Marine Aggregates Producers Association, British Marine Federation, Oil & Gas UK, Renewable Energy Association, Renewable UK, Subsea Cables UK and Carbon Capture and Storage Association.