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LETTER FROM THE VP

THE PEOPLE'S LAW

My fellow sensational Belizeans,

What a year 2017 was! Drama to the very end. But what an ending. On December 30th, 2017, the offshore oil moratorium became law. After calling for a legislated position on the issue of offshore oil for more than seven years, this milestone deserves to be celebrated and proudly proclaimed to the world. And just importantly, we need to celebrate that the moratorium received bi-partisan support in the House of Representatives and unanimous endorsement in the Senate. This is certainly yet another demonstration of the fact that this issue has never, and will never, succumb to time or traditional divisive tactics. Belizean leadership and unity is truly beautiful thing to behold.

It was your enduring participation and our collective leadership on this issue that has brought us to this point in history. And make no mistake, Belize has made history. This legislation reflects an intrinsic national consciousness of just how dependent we are on our natural resources. Blessed with globally significant marine assets, Belizeans deserve to continue to enjoy and benefit from healthy ecosystems. We are now leaders in coral protection efforts given that we are home to the largest reef in the Western Hemisphere and three of the

Western Caribbean's four atolls. By improving and safeguarding the integrity of these assets through practical, sustainable policies, these resources will also be strong enough to protect us during storms and hurricanes. Coral reefs absorb as much as 97% of a wave's energy. And as we recently witnessed, our barrier reef and mangrove forests will also be the first line of our defense if destructive waves from unusual events like tsunamis ever threaten our shores.

That reality is sobering because it highlights that there is a long list of threats that continue to negatively impact our reef and marine resources. High on that list remains the oil lobby. Moving forward, our continued vigilance will ensure the stability and sustainability of our collective future. Take comfort in the fact that it is you, the people of Belize, who will decide how long the moratorium will last. If any future parliament is ever minded to lift it in the future, it is clear they will have to do so with the express consent of the Belizean people before doing so.

Oceana Belize will continue to support the Belizean people in the protection of our beloved Belize Barrier Reef and all our marine assets. In addition to highlighting the progress against offshore oil and leveraging this decision to attract positive attention and support for the country, our efforts will once include work in fisheries policies to ensure that we will always



be able to count on the sea as a source of both food and livelihoods.

We cannot say thank you enough for your support. You stand up every time you need to be counted. It is your voice that echoes in the corridors of power. It is your unwavering commitment that brought about this sea change. By any name: people power, grassroots democracy, community campaign, you made "The People's Law" a reality. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

May God bless you all and may God bless Belize.

Janelle Chanona

OCEANA APPROACH

HOW WE WORK

OCEANA WAS CREATED TO IDENTIFY PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND MAKE THEM HAPPEN

Our oceans are in trouble. But the good news is that together we can restore the oceans to their former glory. Since its founding, Oceana has won more than 100 victories around the globe and protected more than one million square miles of ocean.

Oceana has the tools to win. We are-

CAMPAIGN-DRIVEN: We channel our resources towards strategic, directed campaigns to achieve measurable outcomes that will protect and restore our oceans to former levels of abundance.

FACT-BASED: We believe in the importance of

science in identifying problems and solutions for the oceans.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND EXPERT: Our scientists work closely with our teams of economists, lawyers, communicators and advocates to achieve tangible results for the oceans.

SUPPORTED BY CITIZENS AND ALLIES: Oceana has more than 2 million followers on social media globally and an active base of more than 850,000 supporters subscribed to our email program. Our Ocean Council is a select group of academic, business, policy and philanthropic leaders who represent and support Oceana's efforts on the global stage. Locally, Oceana is supported by 4,000 Belizean Wavemakers.



CAMPAIGNS AND VICTORIES



Oceana's long-term vision for the Belize Barrier Reef is a thriving ecosystem, capable of producing abundant, healthy marine resources that support a vibrant and sustainable local economy for Belizeans. Our campaign goal for Belize in 2017 was to establish:

- Legislated position on offshore oil exploration and drilling in Belize

Status: ACHIEVED

On December 8th, 2017, Belizean parliamentarians gave bi-partisan support for legislation that places an indefinite moratorium on offshore oil in Belize's marine territory, including territorial seas and Exclusive Economic Zone. The *Petroleum Operations (Offshore Zone Moratorium) Bill, 2017* was subsequently referred to the Senate on December 13th where it received unanimous support. Governor General of Belize, His Excellency Sir Colville Young gave his assent on December 29th, 2017 and it was published in the gazette on December 30th, 2017.

The votes of support by Belize's parliamentarians

is historic for several reasons. Given Belize's economic dependence on its natural resources, particularly on globally significant marine assets such as the second longest barrier reef in the world, this legislation safeguards invaluable marine environments from the inherent dangers of offshore oil. Just as importantly, this law recognizes and respects the collective leadership and persistent involvement of tens of thousands of Belizeans for more than seven years on the issue of offshore oil.

Oceana has been an unwavering supporter of this call of the Belizean people since it began in the aftermath of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010 and within the reality that Belize's entire offshore area had already been sold as oil concession licenses. In responding to this development, Oceana's Vice President for Belize Janelle Chanona said, *"This is truly 'The People's Law'. Belizeans have remained steadfast in their opposition to offshore oil since they became aware that marine assets were at risk of irreversible damage from the offshore oil industry. As a nation, we would never have gotten to this point were it not for the enduring participation of the Belizean people. That engagement reflects the national consciousness that we are 'people of the reef'."*

In August 2017, in response to calls to ensure transparency in the decision-making process regarding offshore oil activity, Belize's Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow publicly committed to introducing legislation to enshrining an indefinite moratorium. That commitment was followed through by the introduction of the offshore oil moratorium bill by the Barrow administration on October 20th, 2017.

"Oceana will ensure that the world knows that the Government and people of Belize are serious about safeguarding our heritage and protecting

our collective future from the reality of offshore oil," maintains Chanona. "Moving forward, we will support continued vigilance on this issue to ensure that if any future parliament is minded to lift this moratorium, it would do so transparently and only in the context of the express consent of the Belizean people."

Belize's outstanding and invaluable marine assets and biological diversity has made tourism and fishing key economic pillars in the country's financial landscape. Belize is one of less than 50 places on the planet designated World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. This law will be a critical step in getting Belize off the Sites In Dangers List as oil was identified as direct threat to the site's integrity.



Office of the Prime Minister
Belmopan, Belize, Central America

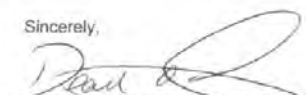
August 15, 2017

Ms. Janelle Chanona
Vice- President
Oceana
BELIZE

Dear Ms. Chanona,

Further to our conversations, I write to inform you that Cabinet today decided that legislation should go to Parliament to enshrine the moratorium, already in effect as a policy matter, on offshore oil exploration in Belize. This will mean that there can be no activity related to oil exploration in Belize's territorial sea and EEZ. The moratorium under the law which we will seek to pass through the National Assembly, will be of indefinite duration. Cabinet expects to send the law to the House by October, the time we have fixed for a further sitting after this Friday's House meeting.

Sincerely,


RIGHT HON. DEAN O. BARROW
Prime Minister

CLEAN ENERGY CAMPAIGN

Since 2011, Oceana has dedicated most of its efforts to achieve a ban on offshore oil activities in Belize's marine environment. But despite a successful lawsuit and a national sentiment clearly on our side, a definitive victory remained elusive. But in 2016, the secret approval of seismic studies in Belizean waters underscored that the threat of oil remained a clear and present danger and left Belizeans with the disturbing reality that Government officials were not acting transparently or in national interest. Bolstered by this dramatic increase in momentum, we committed ourselves entirely to this campaign goal in 2017.

Our overall strategy was to increase the percentage of the public opposed to offshore oil through meaningful engagement and effective communications. This was achieved via a Field Representative Program, in which placed Oceana placed organizers in key coastal and island constituencies. We ensured success by selecting candidates from the communities to guarantee their knowledge with the dynamics of both opportunities and obstacles. Armed with the scientific rationale of the campaign and location specific messaging, these employees held hundreds of public presentations in community spaces and banged on thousands of doors to collect tens of thousands of signatures, petitions and even selfies against offshore oil. They also recruited new Wavemakers and

dedicated volunteers to help spread the word that it was time to stop offshore oil.

The intense public outcry – especially by the tourism and fisheries sectors – over the secret approval of seismic studies compelled the Government to officially to re-affirm that a “policy based” moratorium was in effect. We continued to insist, however, that the government put its moratorium into law.

This context led to another round of meetings with our decision-maker, the Prime Minister of

Belize. Those conversations got us a letter; a written commitment to enact an indefinite moratorium. The public strongly supported this commitment. After that letter, the PM followed through on his commitments. He made a public announcement in the parliament that very week in which he directly associated the action with Oceana. He also provided Oceana a copy of the draft bill prior to its presentation. The legislative draft, entitled *Petroleum Operations (Maritime Zone Moratorium) Bill 2017*, was introduced in the House of Representatives on October 20th, 2017.



There were of course areas that the Bill could have been strengthened and to that point, on November 1st, Oceana made a presentation to the House Committee handling the public consultations on the Bill. The material recommendations included substantial increases in fines and penalties and a mechanism for public consultation if any parliament in the future is minded to lift the moratorium.

On December 8th, 2017, Belizean parliamentarians gave bi-partisan support for legislation that places an indefinite moratorium on offshore oil in Belize's marine territory, including territorial seas and Exclusive Economic Zone. *The Petroleum Operations (Offshore Zone Moratorium) Bill, 2017* was subsequently referred to the Senate on December 13th where it received unanimous support. The Bill was signed by the Governor General of Belize, His Excellency Sir Colville Young and published in the gazette on December 30th, 2017.

In 2018, we will work to make sure the world is aware of the leadership the Government and people of Belize has taken regarding offshore oil. The public attention and accolades locally and internationally will solidify the legacies of the government officials who endorse this course of action. Through our established communications and grassroots platforms, we will continue to stress the importance of coral reef protection measures to ensure fishing and tourism livelihoods, shoreline protection as well as the health of Belize's globally significant coral reefs and marine features.



BELIZEANS SAY, “NO OIL”!

In 2017, Belizeans went above and beyond to make their stance known against offshore oil in Belize’s waters. At the beginning of the year, after the Ministry of Economic Development and Petroleum issued a press release inviting the general public to “public consultations” on marine multibeam and sea seep survey that the Government of Belize intended to complete in the deep offshore waters of Belize, Oceana and the Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural heritage immediately began visiting stakeholder communities such as San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Hopkins, and Placencia to inform them of the

public meeting and to hear their concerns. These communities had already started planning their trips to Belize City for the consultations to make their voices heard loud and clear against any type of offshore oil exploration in Belize, including the proposed multibeam and sea seep survey conducted by a company for and on behalf of the oil industry. During our grassroots tour on January 10th, the Ministry of Economic Development and Petroleum issued an abrupt press release stating that the scheduled consultations had been cancelled giving no further details as to reason for cancellation.

Despite the cancellation of the surveys, the communities of San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Hopkins, and Placencia organized community forums against offshore oil in which human banners reading “NO OIL” were taken. Oceana representatives and Wavemakers attended and delivered remarks at these events showing support for these grassroots initiatives. The photos taken serve as strong testaments that key stakeholders and communities country-wide continued to say NO to offshore oil exploration in Belize.





HANDS ACROSS THE SAND

On May 20th at noon, Belizeans across twelve municipalities joined hands on beaches, across bridges, along sea walls and in public areas to stand in solidarity against offshore oil development in Belize's economically important marine environment.

Every year, activists and ocean-lovers host Hands Across the Sand events around the world to "draw a line in the sand," and say "NO" to dirty fossil fuel projects, as well as call for a shift to clean, renewable energy like offshore wind and solar power. Every day, offshore oil accidents from other parts of the world serve as grim reminders of just how deadly, dirty and dangerous the industry is and highlights the economic risks and environmental hazards posed by the activity to countries like Belize.

In addition to holding hands, other activities included face painting, clean-ups, and poster making. Oceana would like to thank its dedicated Wavemakers and partner organizations for continuing to support this annual initiative and making their stance against offshore oil in Belize known.

"Drill. Spill. Repeat. That is the reality of the offshore oil. Belizeans have, and continue to say, "No!" to the destruction of their livelihoods by this inherently dangerous and dirty industry. That unwavering position needs to be legislated in order to safeguard our collective future," Janelle Chanona, Oceana Belize's Vice President.

REEF WEEK 2017: TURN THE TIDE, RESPECT THE REEF

During Reef Week 2017 Belizeans celebrated the crucial role of coral reefs to our country's economy, food security and cultural heritage under the theme, **"Turn the Tide, Respect the Reef"**. The national activities occurred between March 10th 2017 and March 17th 2017. Since 2013, organizations from across Belize have come together to celebrate "Reef Week" by organizing activities which highlight the incalculable contribution of our marine resources and the Belize Barrier Reef System to the national economy and our collective cultural identity.

This year, Belizeans across the country celebrated the contributions of the Belize Barrier Reef through a multitude of activities, including delivering more than 265,000 signatures from around the world to the Prime Minister's office asking for a ban on offshore oil, hosting a bike ride from the National Assembly building in Belmopan to the Belize City coast to highlight that decisions made in the corridors of power have impact on marine resources, organizing informational fairs, concerts, swims

to the reef, participating in morning show broadcasts live from Punta Gorda, holding art exhibits, executing clean-ups, lionfish culls and launching social media competitions and poetry contests. Oceana hosted its annual Reef Week Instagram Competition, in which Mr. Nadir Price of Belmopan took the top prize. Held under the 2017 Reef Week theme, Nadir's video submission combined footage from the Hol Chan and the Silk Cayes Marine Reserves. His images showcased both the beauty and vulnerability of the Belize Barrier Reef. The Instagram contest encouraged Belizeans to share their original photos and videos that exemplify the Reef Week theme as well as their unique perspective, stories and experiences of the Belize Barrier Reef. Over the course of the competition, many exciting and inspiring entries were published on social media and sent directly to Oceana in Belize. A panel of judges evaluated entries based on creativity, content and composition to determine the winner. Nadir's winning entry can be found on our website www.belize.oceana.org.



More than 190,000 Belizeans living in Belize's coastal and island communities earn their livelihoods from tourism, making that industry account for almost 25% of the country's gross domestic product. Another 15,000 Belizeans are directly dependent on Belize's fisheries for their livelihoods. It is not surprising then that economic reports show that in the areas of tourism, fishing and shoreline protection, the Belize Barrier Reef contributes more than a billion dollars every year to Belize. Therefore, efforts to ensure health and integrity of our marine resources also ensure economic sustainability for the country, and safeguard the interests of almost two thirds of Belize's population.

Within such context, this year the Reef Week committee was proud to have partnered with sensational sponsors to spread awareness about the value and importance of the Belize Barrier Reef. They include Atlantic Bank Limited, Tropic Air, Hamanasi Resort, Portofino Resort, Bowen & Bowen, and Central Cable Vision. Participating organizations include: the Belize Audubon Society, Oceana in Belize, the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment, MarAlliance, the World Wildlife Fund, the Forest and Marine Reserves of Caye Caulker, Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Krem WUB, the Belize City Council, Blue Ventures Belize, the Solid Waste Management Authority, the Belize Fisheries Department, the University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute, the Southern Environmental Association, Sea to Shore Alliance, Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association, ECOMAR Belize, Wildtracks, and the Belize Tourism Industry Association.



Ride to the Reef

LONE WRASSE: EXHIBITION OF TRASHY ART

As part of the events around Reef Week 2017 the Embassy of Mexico to Belize and Oceana hosted a public art exhibit: LONE WRASSE: EXHIBITION OF TRASHY ART, which was on exhibit from March 9th to May 7th, 2017 at the Mexican Cultural Institute – Belize.

LONE WRASSE: EXHIBITION OF TRASHY ART comprised of 32 pieces created by local Belizean artists made from marine debris (plastic, Styrofoam, wood, glass, compact discs, etc.) found on the coasts of Belize. The exhibition is named after the artistic piece, “Lone Wrasse”, which was made using marine debris from coastal and island beaches across Belize.

The free standing ‘fish’ made its debut as a part of the Titans carnival group’s presentation in the 2016 carnival road march.

Oceana and the featured artists approached the subject of pollution in a creative manner in order to create awareness around ocean contamination. The joint hope of Oceana and the Embassy of Mexico to Belize is that Belizeans will begin to think differently about the impact marine debris and trash is having on our country’s aesthetics, on our marine environment and on our own wellbeing.



SEE AND TASTE BELIZE –TEK YU OUTTA BELIZE BUT CAAN TEK BELIZE OUTTA YU!

In October, Oceana was proud to be among the 2017 participants in the annual See & Taste Belize hosted by The Belize Consulate in Florida. This annual fundraiser benefits the Inspiration Centre (based in Belize City) and serves as a unique opportunity to meet hundreds of Belizeans living abroad. We used the event to inform the Belizean diaspora of our offshore oil campaign; the timing proved critical as See and Taste took place just prior to the scheduled introduction of the moratorium legislation to safeguard our economically important marine resources from the dangers of offshore oil. These sensational Belizeans did not hesitate to add their voices to the offshore oil campaign, demonstrating that the participation of all Belizeans in this conversation is crucial! We extend a huge thank you to the organizers and guests for their support.



ROCK THE REEF CONCERT

Following the bi-partisan support given to the Petroleum Operations Maritime Zone Bill 2017 that places an indefinite moratorium on offshore oil in Belize's marine territory, Oceana invited the Belizean public to celebrate the moment by attending a free concert showcasing Belize's top artists. The event took place at the Memorial Park on Saturday, December 9th, 2017. The stellar lineup of artists included Grand Masta, Tanya Carter, Melonie Gillett, Dajah, World Culture Band, C Wills backed up by the Laru Beya Band, Verge of Umbra, and Supa G. These amazing artists added their voices to the tens of thousands of Belizeans who continue to say "NO" to offshore oil in order to protect Belizean jobs in fishing and tourism, quality and way of life, as well as Belize's economically and ecologically significant marine resources.

The concert was held to celebrate the collective leadership and persistent involvement of tens of thousands of Belizeans for more than seven years on the issue of offshore oil in Belize. Given Belize's economic dependence on its natural resources, particularly on globally significant marine assets such as the second longest barrier reef in the world, this legislation safeguards invaluable marine environments from the inherent dangers of offshore oil.

Following the support in the National Assembly, Oceana's Vice President for Belize Janelle Chanona said, *"This is truly 'The People's Law'. Belizeans have remained steadfast in their opposition to offshore oil since they became aware that marine assets were at risk of irreversible damage from the offshore oil industry. As a nation, we would never have gotten to this point were it not for the enduring participation of the Belizean people. That engagement reflects the national consciousness that we are 'people of the reef'."*

Other community events including family fun days, cocktails, and dinners were held throughout the country to thank the Belizean people for their commitment to this national issue.



Photo Courtesy Will Moreno Photography

FISHERIES CAMPAIGN

In 2017, we continued to engage with the fisheries sector on the issue of offshore oil. The voices of Belizean fishermen voices rang loud and clear in opposing this issue. Within these conversations, we have continued to underscore the urgent need to address indiscriminate and destructive fishing gear such as gillnets.

Gillnets destroy important habitats as well as ecologically important species such as parrotfish. Parrotfish and other reef grazers are critically important to reef health. These herbivores consume the algae that compete with corals. Several scientific studies have determined that the fishing related decline of herbivorous fish such as parrotfish has led to more algae-dominated reefs in the Caribbean. Parrotfish is already a protected species in Belize but so long as indiscriminate gear like gillnets are legal fishing gear in Belize, all protected species including manatees, turtles as well as whale sharks and nurse sharks are at risk.

We are unable to discern any logical reason while gillnets remain legal in Belize's marine environment. Fishermen have complained about this gear for decades. Only 169 (6%) Belizean fishermen are licensed to use this gear; moreover, a significant percentage of those 169 fishers only rely on this gear seasonally. The Coast Guard has also asserted that a ban will make enforcement efforts more effective. The economic case against gillnets is even stronger. Gillnets are compromising other protected species such as sports fishing species: bonefish, tarpon and permit; sports

fishing is a 100-million-dollar industry in Belize. Within such context, we are confident that a communications-led transparency campaign will expose that there is no legitimate reason not to ban the use of this gear. Transparency means sustainability. We are also confident that in partnership with other conservation non-governmental organizations, fishers can be supported in making the transition from destructive gear to clean fishing gear.

As part of our public messaging, we will highlight and leverage the unparalleled grassroots base we have built through our direct engagement with fishers, social media influencers, allies, government officials and the public. Our outreach will include –

- **A video documentary** that describes the gear and its impact to the coral habitats, species and livelihoods
- **Letters of support** for a complete ban from key national voices including the Belize Chamber of Commerce, the Belize Coast Guard, the Belize Tourism Industry Association, national fishing associations and sports fishers
- **Provocative billboard messaging** in key coastal locations as well as in Belmopan
- **Documented evidence of support from gillnetters** who have relinquished their nets
- **Petitions** by commercial fishers asking the Government to ban gillnets as a legal gear
- **Unity across the conservation community** for a ban of this gear
- **Evidence that a gear ban on gillnets will increase protections for sharks** in Belizean waters

- **Scientific support** that a gear ban will **support protection for biologically important reef species** such as parrotfish
- **Evidence** that a gear ban will **safeguard coral reef habitats** from destruction
- **Pledges from multiple groups to aid in the transition** of the 169 gillnets away from this gear to alternative gear and livelihoods
- **Collaborations with local entrepreneurs** to increase the awareness of the impacts of gillnets
- **Social media blogs and postings** from key influencers to increase awareness through our hashtag **#stopthenets**.



BELIZE COAST GUARD
4 1/2 Mile George Price Highway
P.O. Box 1803, Belize City



REF: BNCG/7/01/16(97) VOL II

20 June 2016

Ms. Janelle Chanona
Vice President
Oceana Oceana in Belize

Madam,

PROPOSED BANNED ON GILLNETS IN BELIZEAN WATERS

The Belize Coast Guard favorably endorse the phasing out and the eventual banned on the use of Gillnets in Belize. We have had first hand accounts of the destructive impact of gillnets on the marine environment. Our primary encounters with gillnets is in the southern waters where illegal cross border fishing takes place. Our enforcement patrols have recovered gillnets that expands beyond reasonable distances, and even more tragic, the indiscriminate catch by these fishing equipment.

We do believe that a banned on gillnets will assist with the rehabilitation of the fragile marine environment and promote a more sustainable practice. The Coast Guard considers a healthy marine environment to be crucial to our coastal development and the preservation of our natural heritage.

We look forward to working with Oceana and other interested parties to make this initiative eventually become legislated.

Respectfully,

E BENNETT
For
Commandant





On March 25th 2017, Oceana collaborated with the Barrier Reef Sports Bar & Grill, Frontier, REMAX Island Real Estate, Belize Fisheries Department, Ocean Academy, Belikin, and Travellers Liquors, to host the second annual Caye Caulker Lionfish Derby. There was a total of nine boats from both San Pedro and Caye Caulker that participated in two main categories: scuba diving and free diving. Team Scuba Sensation took the prize for the most lionfish caught per person in the scuba diving category with 182 lionfish, while team French Angel got 141 lionfish in the free diving category. Team Caye of Happiness won smallest lionfish caught with 8.2cm and team San Pedro Sagebrush won largest lionfish caught with 36.1cm. In addition to the lionfish derby, Oceana also collaborated with the Turneffe Atoll Sustainable Association (TASA), Blue Ventures, Belize Audubon Society and the Chunox Fishermen

Association to carry out a lionfish workshop in Chunox Village. The objective of the workshop was to encourage fishermen to view the catch of lionfish as a potential income source. They were taught how to handle and clean a lionfish while also informed of the negative impacts these have on the local fisheries. For more than two decades, these invaders have been targeting juvenile fish, effectively decimating native fish populations in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. With no natural predators, rapid reproduction rates and a voracious appetite, lionfish numbers are exploding, and that means bad news for the ecosystems we depend on. The good news: lionfish is delicious! Once deprived of its venomous spines, lionfish can be prepared like any other fish. To beat them, we've got to eat them!

LIONFISH: EAT THEM TO BEAT THEM!



BELIZE CHOCOLATE COMPANY: GO STRAW-LESS CAMPAIGN

In October, the Belize Chocolate Company, a boutique chocolate shop based in San Pedro Town, announced its “Go Straw-less Campaign” in an effort to reduce the number of plastic straws that eventually end up negatively impacting our marine environment. The campaign aimed to raise awareness on the negative impacts that single-use plastics such as straws have on our marine environment by encouraging customers who purchase a milkshake or cold drink to go straw-less. For each customer that does so, the company donated \$1 to Oceana in Belize to support our efforts of reducing plastic pollution through education and clean-up campaigns. *“We hope that this campaign will have a positive turn out, and in turn motivate other businesses, to help minimize the amount of garbage on the island,”* said Jo Sayer, owner of Belize Chocolate Company.



As evident in all our clean-up campaigns, straws are one of the most common plastic culprits that end up on beaches, and eventually in the water. Once floating in the sea, they can cause serious harm to marine animals such as turtles, who mistake the straws for food and end up ingesting the harmful toxins. Oceana has been proud to support the Belizean businesses who have already launched innovative and affordable alternatives to plastic straws, such as glass and bamboo straws, as well as clam shells and other food containers made from biodegradable and compostable material. Given the Government of Belize's 2018's announcement to phase out of single use plastic and Styrofoam by earth day 2019, businesses like Belize Chocolate Company and others in key tourism communities are leading the way on making this transition.



TURTLEY COOL COLLAB WITH TWIG & PEARL

In October, Oceana collaborated with Belizean designer and owner of *Twig & Pearl*, Rebecca Stirm, on the Hawksbill turtle handbag collection. The idea behind the collection was sparked through conversations with Stirm and Oceana Belize Vice President, Janelle Chanona on endangered species, the effect of our every-day lives on the environment, manatees, nesting turtles, and gillnets. Stirm took keen interest on the Hawksbill Turtle, and the impacts that human action is having on their declining population. With Oceana's support, Stirm begun doing research on the Hawksbill turtle, and this sparked her idea to use a collection of handbags to bring awareness to the threats this endangered species is facing. The result was a mini-



collection of three pieces: a beach tote, sling bag, and colorful wristlet. Each piece features Twig & Pearl's Hawksbill Turtle artwork, hand-printed "lokahi" interior lining in ocean blue, and a "carry bag" made from recycled confiscated gillnets sourced by Oceana. *"It's so much more rewarding to be bringing not only beauty into people's lives, but also bringing awareness to things that matter"* said Stirm. The designer subsequently made a financial donation to Oceana to support our efforts against gillnets, given the gear's direct threat to sea turtles like the Hawksbill.

In October 2017, Oceana invited her to be a guest speaker at our Wavemaker Annual General Meeting. She shared with the audience that she was affected by the fact that entanglement in a gillnet is a death sentence

for protected and biologically important species as well as charismatic species like turtles. Stirm called on everyone to use their voice to speak for the voiceless. *"As a fashion designer, I'm able to reach those who are interested in fashion, and make them aware of things like the endangered Hawksbill Turtle, which they wouldn't necessarily be interested in were it not for this collection."* She also encouraged the audience to be innovative by using social media. *"We can all use our spheres of influence to speak up for the environment. Whether it be 200 followers on Instagram, or 20 on Snapchat, we can use our [social media] platforms to positively influence others."*



ONLINE AND IN THE NEWS

In 2017, Oceana's social media following grew to 36,746 supporters; 20,746 followers on Facebook and 16,000 followers on Instagram.

Clean Energy and Offshore Oil

Oceana's advocacy efforts over the last seven years has shown that the Belizean public is firmly against offshore oil activity in Belizean waters. Our Communications strategy has always been to remain as transparent as possible with the Belizean public, and this has proven successful in maintaining their engagement and involvement with the offshore oil campaign.

On August 18th, 2017, the Prime Minister of Belize, Right Honorable Dean Barrow, officially announced in the House of Representatives his administration's commitment and plan to legislate an indefinite moratorium of offshore oil activity in Belize's territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone. In his address to the House of Representatives, PM Barrow stated, *"[This is] the consequence of conversation with Oceana and The Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage, cabinet felt that the time has come to put the policy commitment into writing. It makes no practical difference since under either regime there is not going to be any licenses granted for offshore oil exploration activities. But it certainly, I believe, gives comfort to those who require some comfort that this is a step beyond just the policy commitment"*.

This announcement resulted in a total of 29 media hits including both local and international coverage. This story received coverage on TV stations such Channel 5 News, Channel 7 News, Love TV, and Krem TV. Online hits included Ambergris Today, Breaking Belize News, Seafood Source, Panda.org, Meteoweb.

eu, Zazoom.it, Greenreport.it, and Webwire.com. Newspaper hits included The Guardian Newspaper, The San Pedro Sun, and Ambergris Today.

On October 20th, 2017, staying true to its commitment, the Government of Belize introduced legislation into the House of Representatives to enshrine a moratorium on offshore oil in its marine territory, making history for Belize. The introduction of this legislation brought us one step closer to safeguarding our marine environment from the threat of offshore oil activity. The introduction of the Bill resulted in 19 media hits including stories on Channel 5 News, Channel 7 News, CTV3 News, Love News, the Amandala Newspaper, The San Pedro Sun, Ambergris Today, and online sites like Meteoweb.eu, Press Release Point, Panda.org, and Breaking Belize News.

The moratorium legislation went for its second reading in the House of Representatives on December 8th, 2017, where it received rare

bipartisan support. On December 13th, 2017, the bill was unanimously endorsed by the Senate, with the Senator representing the Business community thanking Oceana for our consistent leadership on this issue. On December 30th, 2017, with the Governor General's assent, the moratorium on offshore oil in Belize became law, safeguarding invaluable marine environments from the inherent dangers of offshore oil.

The passing of the moratorium into law resulted in a total of 90 media hits (as of December 31st, 2017) including both local and international coverage. This story received coverage on local TV stations such Channel 5 News, Channel 7 News, Love TV, and Krem TV. Online hits included Environment News Service, TeleSUR English, EnvironmentGuru, E-Gazette.it, Mongabay.com News, Yahoo! Notizie, Press Release Point, Panda.org, Greenreport, and Webwire to name a few. Newspaper hits included The Guardian Newspaper, The San Pedro Sun, Ambergris Today, and The Reporter.



EVENTS

On Saturday, September 30th, Oceana formally recognized two Belizeans as the 2017 Ocean Heroes. They are eleven-year-old student Madison Edwards and career tour guide and conservation educator, Luz Hunter.

Hunter has been exploring the wilds of Belize most of her life. Her youthful awareness of respect for wildlife and the importance of the sustainable use for the marine environment led her to a career in the tourism industry.



Over the last three decades, Luz has earned the respect of both local and international university professors and industry regulators who rely on her encyclopedic knowledge of the local flora and fauna to educate students as well as fellow Belizeans working towards tour guides licenses. Hunter is also a tireless advocate for turtles and manatees, often dedicating much of her personal time and resources to clean-up initiatives on nesting beaches and fearlessly calling out speeding boats for their role in an increasing number of manatee deaths. Hunter shared the award with her faithful volunteers and said, *"I am using my voice to speak for creatures like the turtle and the manatee. My goal is to have people understand how we can affect the environment less, their home less, than to have*

them adjust to us. That's what visitors to this country are attracted to, so whatever we do to those creatures, we do to ourselves."

Despite her young age, Edwards has leveraged her social media following as a platform to advocate for the protection of Belize's marine environment. Edwards says she is planning to use the recognition to inspire more young people to speak up about what they care about. *"One person, no matter how small, can make a big difference."* When she saw seismic ships in Belizean waters, Madison Edwards embarked on a personal crusade to highlight the importance of safeguarding marine ecosystems from the inherent dangers of offshore oil activity. As part of many self-motivated awareness activities, at age ten, Madison became the youngest Belizean to swim the length of the reef during a week-long sailing trip. As a proud San Pedrana, Madison is all too aware of just how dependent Belizeans are on the reef. *"Just put your all into what you care about. Last week I saw a video of one of our leaders addressing students at the University of Belize. His stance was obviously for offshore oil, and many of the words he said hurt me. In his speech he said we all need to think for ourselves. But tonight, I am here to ask you to think about my generation and the generations to come. Please consider the planet you leave behind."*

The 2017 Ocean Heroes received coverage on Channel 5 News, Channel 7 News, Ambergris Today, Love News, San Pedro Sun, and Topix.com. The iTravelBelize team was in attendance and provided live stream coverage on their Facebook page.

On September 30th, 2017, Oceana Belize in collaboration with the Scouts Association and sensational Belizeans from across the country came out to participate in the Annual Coastal and

River Cleanup as a part of the global initiative: International Coastal Cleanup. Cleanups were carried out throughout various locations in Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize City, Belmopan, Cayo, Placencia, Hopkins, Georgetown, Independence, Golden Stream, Big Falls, and Punta Gorda. The cleanup campaign received coverage on Channel 7 News, Love FM, and The Guardian Newspaper.

On Saturday October 28th, 2017, Belizeans from across the country gathered at the Belmopan Civic Center to participate in Oceana's Annual General Meeting (AGM) of its dedicated volunteers, our "Wavemakers".



During the event, several Wavemakers were awarded certificates of appreciation for their sensational support for Oceana's campaigns and initiatives over the past year. Oceana was proud to recognize the St. Catherine Academy (SCA) Wavemaker Club and parent Mrs. Tania Mahler as the 2017 Wavemakers of the Year. The SCA Wavemaker Club, which started in December 2015, was awarded for their dedication to the offshore oil campaign as well as their consistent involvement in cleanups throughout the year. Earlier this month, the SCA Wavemaker Club succeeded in implementing their "Kick Plastic" campaign on campus when the school banned the use of single use plastic and Styrofoam, which positively impacts both the environment and reduces the administrative costs of garbage disposal. Mrs. Tania Mahler was awarded for her unwavering support to the SCA Wavemaker Club by attending all club organized events and activities and for always being a voice of encouragement to the members.

Special guest speakers included social media influencer and model, Joyjah Estrada and Belizean fashion designer and owner of Twig & Pearl, Rebecca Stirm. Estrada championed the use of sustainable fishing gear by sharing her first-hand experience of being "caught" in a gillnet as a part of Oceana's advocacy against the use of gillnets at sea. "Being stuck in a gillnet is no joke," Estrada shared. "I had cuts and bruises. I imagined what creatures like turtles, dolphins, manatees go through. They are worth more alive than dead. Until we stop the nets, we are drowning our chances of relying on the sea in the future."

Stirm was similarly affected by the fact that entanglement in a gillnet is a death sentence for protected and biologically important species as well as charismatic species like turtles. Stirm called on everyone to use their voice to speak for the voiceless. "As a fashion designer, I'm able to reach those who are interested in fashion, and make them aware of things like



the endangered Hawksbill Turtle, which they wouldn't necessarily be interested in were it not for this collection." She also encouraged the audience to be innovative by using social media. "We can all use our spheres of influence to speak up for the environment. Whether it be 200 followers on Instagram, or 20 on Snapchat, we can use our [social media] platforms to positively influence others."

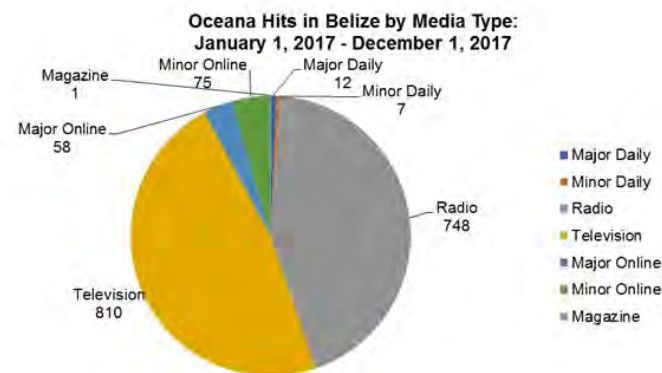
Wavemakers from Corozal, Orange Walk, the Belize District, San Pedro, San Ignacio, Belmopan, Dangriga, Hopkins and Toledo attended this year's event. Belizean Wavemakers are part of the more than a million Oceana members that support the protection and restoration of the world's oceans. This event received coverage on Love FM, The San Pedro Sun, Ambergris Today, iTravel Belize, and Topix.com. It also received social media coverage from social media influencer and guest speaker, Joyjah Estrada, who provided live Instagram coverage of the event on her page. The iTravelBelize team was also in attendance at the AGM.



ADDITIONAL PRESS

On November 9th, 2017, Oceana's Belize District Field Representative, Celeshia Guy, was awarded at the annual Belize National Youth Awards, held as part of the ongoing World Youth Conference 2017 being celebrated under the theme "Globally Running to 2030, becoming Sustainably Strong!"

Guy was awarded the Environmental Youth Award for her tremendous contributions to increasing awareness of our natural environment as well as promoting active youth participation in the decision-making processes for sustainable management and development of our marine ecosystems. This recognition received coverage on Love FM, Love TV, and was also featured in The Reporter Newspaper.



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



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4,000+
WAVEMAKERS

OCEANA Protecting the
World's Oceans

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PLEASE GIVE TODAY TO HELP US REBUILD OCEAN ABUNDANCE

Each of us has the power to help save the oceans and feed the world. The support of people like you allows Oceana to carry out targeted campaigns to end overfishing, limit bycatch, protect habitats and curb ocean pollution.

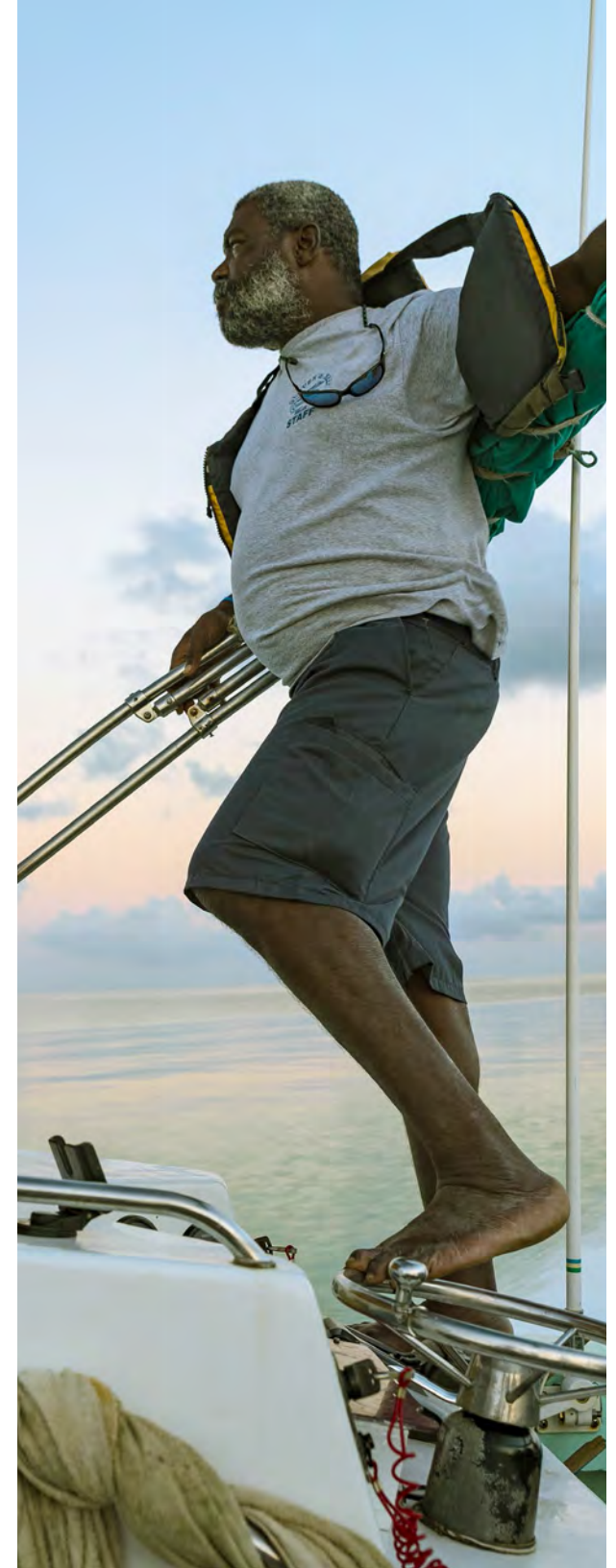
With your help, Oceana can win victories that will help to restore the ocean's bio-diversity and abundance for generations to come. Become part of a growing circle of ocean advocates by joining Oceana today.

TAKE ACTION

Become a Wavemaker and join an active base of more than 850,000 supporters subscribed to our email program. Being a Wavemaker means you won't stand by while shrimp nets drown sea turtles and airgun blasts deafen dolphins to enable offshore drilling. With you by our side, we can fight these and other threats.

FOLLOW OCEANA

Follow Oceana on social media for breaking news from all over the world and insights into our research and campaigns.





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