Dear Elana Mendelson,

I am writing in support of, and to urge you to consider, the recommendations submitted by Earth Law Center (ELC) regarding their views on the BBNJ and the United State’s position in negotiations (85 FR 6010).

The health and wellbeing of the human population and all life on the planet, regardless of its proximity to the Ocean, is dependent on the health and functioning of the Ocean and its cycles.

There have been decades of overfishing, pollution and extractive activities that are expanding further and deeper. The added pressure caused by climate change and ocean acidification means that protecting marine ecosystems and the High Seas is now more important than ever before. However, to date, the international legal system has been unsuccessful in addressing and preventing the deterioration of marine ecosystems and the threats to biodiversity, in large part due to their flawed highly anthropocentric purpose.

As expanded upon in ELC’s recommendation, we must:

* Adopt an ecocentric approach to conservation; we do not own the Ocean and it is not a resource with value determined by human utility and benefit;
* Recognize the human responsibility to protect the Ocean. With rights to the Ocean, comes reciprocal responsibilities; and
* Consider the Ocean as an interest and stakeholder in negotiations and in the Treaty text.

We support ELC’s recommendation because we need transformative change -- not business as usual. Experts and organizations worldwide have been calling on us to evolve and shift our approach to conservation for decades. We must act now and swiftly in order to fundamentally change our relationship with the Ocean. Taking into account and applying ELC’s recommendation will allow us to do so.

On behalf of people and planet,

[Name]