



## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, Waterkeepers Bahamas (WKB), an accredited member of the Waterkeeper® Alliance and Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF) are both vital organizations dedicated to the conservation and education of marine ecosystems in The Bahamas and beyond. Waterkeepers Bahamas focuses on community-based initiatives to ensure the safety of the Bahamas' waters for swimming, fishing, and drinking for future generations. BREEF plays a crucial role in safeguarding the marine environment by providing on-the-ground instruction to empower Bahamians as environmental stewards, advocating for strong policies, actively restoring reef habitats, and representing the region internationally. Together, Waterkeepers Bahamas and BREEF employ grassroots programs, education, outreach, research, and policy advocacy to engage all stakeholders in The Bahamas, including visitors, and contribute to the conservation and preservation of marine ecosystems on a global scale;

**AND WHEREAS**, The Bahamas recognizes and celebrates World Oceans Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, a global celebration for protecting the ocean environment; As such the organizations propose that the 8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, be declared National Ocean Protection Week in line with World Oceans Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> June;

**AND WHEREAS**, as a notable ocean nation and in the 50<sup>th</sup> year of our Independence, it is important to recognize the significance of the country's marine environment and the role it plays in sustaining the economy, culture, and identity of the nation. The crystal-clear waters surrounding The Bahamas are home to an incredible diversity of marine life. However, these waters face increasing pollution, overfishing, and climate change threats. It's essential to take action and ensure their long-term health and vitality. This requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including government agencies, private industry, and local communities;

**AND WHEREAS**, local businesses, environmental groups, tourism advocates, and Bahamian and international leaders are determined to protect the waters of The Bahamas from the harms of climate change;

**AND WHEREAS**, The Bahamas is acutely and uniquely vulnerable to global climate change and its associated risks, including sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, ocean acidification, damage to corals, increase in severity of superstorms, loss of biodiversity and fisheries, disruption of food systems and livelihoods, and political instability;

**AND WHEREAS**, Bahamians are showing increasing awareness of global climate change and the associated risks to their food security, economy, culture and way of life as well as the unique vulnerability of the islands and waters of The Bahamas;

**NOW, THEREFORE I**, Philip E. Davis, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, do hereby proclaim the week commencing on **World Oceans Day**, Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 and ending Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 as "**NATIONAL OCEAN PROTECTION WEEK**";

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my Hand and Seal  
this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.

**PHILIP E. DAVIS**  
**PRIME MINISTER**