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**Speaker Highlights - Dr. Sylvia Earle – Sunday, August 9, 2015
American Renewable Energy Day Summit**

The ocean is *not* too big to fail – it is changing in ways that not only don't bode well for whales and fish but for us as well."

"We are changing the nature of nature – something I thought impossible when I was a child."

"I couldn't have imagined the changes we're seeing now – when I was a child." Now increasing areas that have been protecting water sheds and diversity of life have been lost.

One-half of the coral reefs are gone; 90% of the fish are gone. There are changes in chemistry not only because of the plastic debris and other materials in the water, but also due to what falls from sky – carbon dioxide that turns to carbonic acid in the ocean.

We're already seeing changes on islands due to sea level rise (sometimes overtaking island nations). Areas are being overfished.

We're adding elements to the oceans that weren't there. It's becoming harder to reverse it. For example, plastic debris gets eaten by fish.

Industrial fleets are taking over some of the local fishing industries.

"But I see the changes as cause for hope." We could not see the world from afar when I was child, but now we can in a way that connects information. We can see the patterns. "We have an edge from anyone who preceded us on the planet, and maybe just in time."

"Hope Spots" – Sylvia's ideas for areas we can preserve if we stop killing things. These are large portions of the ocean – places where the potential and the threats have been identified and concrete action is taking place.

"We can't reverse the damage that's been done." But can reverse some areas' trends.

There is an opportunity to stabilize – we need to embrace land and life support systems and oceans.

(more)

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“Easter Island is a symbol of hope...the tide is turning toward favorable action.”

Example – the butterfly fish. The only place it’s found is at Easter Island. “There’s hope for some of the creatures that have managed to escape our destruction.”

Ascension Island – another area of hope. Turtles are coming there to breed. “It’s a moment in time.”

Some good news –

- Obama declaring waters as safe havens.
- Bush took actions for the northwest Hawaiian Islands.
- 350,000 square miles of ocean have been protected from extractive actions.

The ocean holds most of the life on earth – it’s where most of the sunlight falls, where most of the carbon is. The average depth is 2.5 miles – we’ve written it off. Life exists from the surface to where James Cameron touched down.

“It is the greatest era of hope...The tide is turning.”

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