

# Your ocean advocacy matters more than ever

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On June 5th, Tiffany & Co. joined more than 902 businesses, 180 colleges and universities, and leaders from 125 cities to send an open letter to the international community. Our message: we're still in on the Paris Climate Agreement. Despite President Trump's announcement, we remain fully committed to achieving ambitious climate goals and accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Climate change is a broad issue, affecting the economy, the sustainability of our communities, our natural resources and public health. The threats posed by climate change require urgent action, and companies, civic leaders and citizens must all do their part. I encourage everyone to carve out a niche and focus on the problems they're best positioned to solve. At Tiffany & Co., beyond reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, we have long focused on protecting the oceans. The relationship between oceans and climate change is well studied. Healthy, living oceans help absorb carbon dioxide and reduce the impact of climate change. But climate change also threatens oceans. It has contributed to rising sea levels, warmer water temperatures and ocean acidification, leading to the loss of marine life, decreased catches for fisheries and decreased economic opportunity.



*Image from Getty Images*

Tiffany & Co.'s ocean advocacy focuses on the protection of coral, which we stopped selling in our jewelry over 10 years ago. Many see coral as a plant or a rock – they don't understand it is an animal, and a cornerstone species for healthy marine ecosystems. Last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released a report warning that corals reefs in the United States are on course to disappear within the next 20 or 30 years due to coral bleaching from climate change. Scientists predict that nearly 90 percent of the world's coral reefs will be gone by 2050. Coral reefs – which shelter 25 per cent of marine species, protect shorelines, enable fisheries and attract tourists – are not ecosystems we can afford to lose.

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The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, which Tiffany & Co. established in 2000 to focus the company's philanthropic efforts, is proud to support organizations that are dedicated to preserving coral ecosystems for future generations. In collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies and Paul G. Allen Philanthropies, The Foundation support 50 Reefs, a global initiative that will identify the 50 reefs least vulnerable to climate change and best placed to seed the future of reefs, in order to galvanize targeted action and bolster long-term coral conservation. The Foundation has also been proud to support the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) coral and marine conservation efforts since 2000, recently donating \$1 million to expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around the world. With a target of creating 3.7 million square kilometers of new MPAs, WCS will support the UN Sustainable Development Goal of protecting 10 per cent of the world's oceans by 2020.



*Image from Getty Images*

Research is critical, but must be complemented by citizen education and engagement. Most people don't spend much time underwater – in the U.S., active divers make up just 1.1 per cent of the population. Those of us who experience coral first-hand know of its magic, but how do we translate that experience to people above water to inspire advocacy? The Tiffany & Co. Foundation's grantee Conservation International has digitized the need for coral advocacy through Valen's Reef, an immersive virtual reality experience set in Indonesia's Bird's Head Seascape, home to one of the world's most biologically diverse reefs. This visually stunning film captures a 12-year conservation success story, with the goal of inspiring viewers to take action to protect marine ecosystems.



*Image from Getty Images*

These initiatives represent a variety of innovative approaches to coral conservation, but more must be done. Addressing climate change requires bold commitments and cooperation between sectors, but not every action needs to be massive in scale or cost. Clean Seas, a new campaign from UN Environment, offers consumers accessible calls to action, such as avoiding cosmetic products with microbeads or refusing to use plastic straws. Companies can make small changes, too; for example, Tiffany & Co. recently instituted a ban on serving shark fin soup at any events we host. Shark fin soup is a dish historically associated with luxury culture, but the soup drives the unsustainable shark fin trade, which exploits and threatens shark populations.

#SaveOurOcean – the rallying cry of this week’s UN Ocean Conference – is a tall order for any one person or organization, especially in the context of climate change, which can sometimes feel like an intangible threat. But there remains cause for optimism. In the absence of leadership from Washington, states, cities and businesses representing a sizeable percentage of the U.S. economy will fulfill the climate goals we have set, working together to take forceful action. Additionally, the 194 nations which remain in the agreement will move ahead regardless of the U.S. decision. And as we work to protect Earth’s most precious resources, the strength of our collective individual actions should not be underestimated. After all, the ocean itself is made up of single drops.

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