



# 2023 Impact Report



2021 United Nations Decade  
2030 of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

Image: joyt



Dear Friends,

2023 was a year of major accomplishments for the Blue Climate Initiative (BCI) as we concentrated on two programs where we could have the greatest impact: (1) a deep sea mining (DSM) moratorium, which many ocean experts believe is the most critical issue facing our ocean today, and (2) supporting and elevating Indigenous voices on ocean and climate issues.

The Blue Climate Initiative was born four years ago as an initiative of the nonprofit Tetiaroa Society to move beyond the borders of Tetiaroa and address the most important environmental issue humankind has faced: climate change. To create our plan of action, we assembled over 60 globally renowned experts to identify the most promising “transformational opportunities” for ocean-based solutions to climate change. The results of this work, which can be found on our website, provide a wonderfully informative guide to impactful ocean action, and guide us today.

We then worked on advancing these “transformational opportunities” through various programs including (a) two global incentive challenges where we raised and awarded \$1.2 million in prize money to encourage and accelerate the most impactful solutions, (b) a major global summit in French Polynesia to advance transformational opportunities, and (c) collaborative efforts with an amazing coalition of global leaders to help turn the dial on climate change.

Our work over the past year on a DSM moratorium was multifaceted and included (1) sponsoring a call by Indigenous leaders for a DSM ban (which to date has been signed by representatives of over 70 indigenous groups in 50 countries), (2) an exclusive presentation on the folly of DSM to a US Interagency Working Group organized by the White House, (3) bringing Indigenous voices and new thinking to the floor of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), and (4) publishing an important and influential research paper debunking the mining industry’s claim that DSM is necessary for the growing EV market and the green transition – thus undermining the mining industry’s strongest argument in favor of DSM. To date, BCI’s paper has been picked up by over 188 publications worldwide and has received over 200,000 impressions.

We have made it a priority to elevate the voices of Indigenous communities, which have been underrepresented or ignored far too long. They bring a deep understanding and invaluable perspective regarding ocean protection and our relationship with the ocean. Supporting Indigenous rights has been central to us since the founding of Tetiaroa Society. From the outset we have

been inspired by Marlon Brando, the former owner of Tetiaroa and, unknown to some, a civil rights advocate, environmentalist, and remarkable visionary. As many know from Marlon's decision to ask Sacheen Littlefeather to refuse his Best Actor Award at the Academy Awards ceremony in protest of the treatment of Native Americans, Marlon was an outspoken advocate for Native American rights. We are honored to carry Marlon's passion forward in our own programs.

We deeply appreciate all the support we have received over the past year, including the financial support and leadership of Richard Bailey, support from The Brando resort on Tetiaroa, guidance from our Steering Committee members Richard Bailey, Costas Christ, Neil Davies, Jeanne Everett, Dan Kammen and Victoria Rowland, and brilliant collaborations from our network of incredible ocean and climate scientists and change-makers.

Fundraising will be critical to the success of BCI's programs in 2024, and we would very much appreciate your considering making a tax-deductible donation to BCI. Information for making a donation is provided on the back cover of this report. Thank you for your support and in helping us make a difference!

With appreciation,

*Stan Rowland*

Stan Rowland  
Chief Executive Officer



Image: Katherine O'Brien

## Statement of Unity and Support Delivered by Tetiara Society and the Blue Climate Initiative Taputapuatea, May 2022

The Ocean, like the Sky, is the common heritage of all humanity.

Polynesians are an ocean people. Your history, livelihood and spirituality all derive from the Ocean.

To arrive at your homes, your ancestors traveled across the immensity of the Pacific in small craft, with unequaled prowess and knowledge, accomplishing the most astonishing feats of seamanship in the annals of maritime history.

You are hardy, brave and resourceful, and you have learned over the centuries to manage your environment. You have something to teach the world. Above all, respect, respect for the Ocean, the Mother and Source of all life on our planet.

On behalf of Tetiara Society and the Blue Climate Initiative, yes, we hear your call and in return offer our solemn promise to add our voice to yours in protection of your sacred *atua*, the ocean.

We make this commitment before the elders assembled here at Taputapuatea, this sacred site in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. Like the Hōkūle'a on its Moananuiākea voyage around the Pacific, the work of the BCI has just begun.

We acknowledge the important work underway by the governments of French Polynesia and Cook Islands. Old alliances created centuries ago in this place, are guiding us in our resolve to work with all of you to unite the communities across the Pacific to action.

In our efforts to care for the oceans and develop climate change solutions we will be informed by and work with local and indigenous peoples.

We are honored to be here among the Pacific voyaging community, working together.

We offer this symbol of our promise to be carried by the Hōkūle'a on its voyage of hope and unity. Tetiara Society and the Blue Climate Initiative will be with you on the canoe.

# VOICE OF THE OCEAN



The Voice of the Ocean program brings together Indigenous leaders and communities to share their deep relationship and connection with the ocean, build a “rights of the ocean” movement from the Indigenous perspective, and assemble a powerful coalition of Indigenous communities for ocean protection.

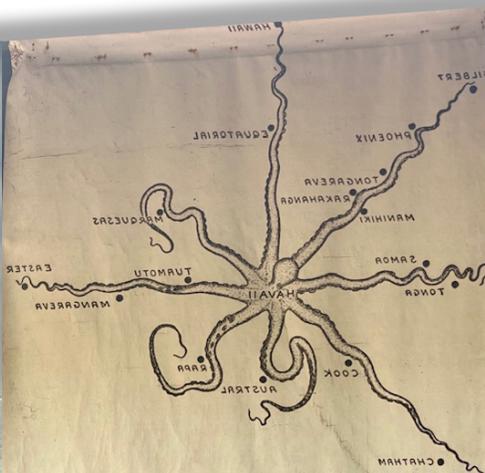
The program emerged through discussions at the Blue Climate Summit in 2022. Since then, the program has given rise to a rapidly growing collaborative effort of Indigenous communities to protect the Pacific Ocean and a powerful call against deep sea mining by over 70 Indigenous groups in 50 countries.

There is a growing recognition around the world that Indigenous communities have a right to a seat at the table when decisions are being made that affect them and their culture and heritage. BCI’s work helps make this possible.

For more information:

IMPAC5 [Keynote Speech Hinano Murphy](#)

Ocean Tribes Gathering [Voice of the Ocean Presentation](#)



# INDIGENOUS VOICES FOR A BAN ON DEEP SEA MINING



Building on the momentum of the Voice of the Ocean program, in early 2023 BCI sponsored a petition by Indigenous leaders calling for a ban on Deep Sea Mining. This effort supported and elevated underrepresented voices on an issue of vital importance to their cultures and livelihoods.

Notable signatories include Moetai Brotherson, President of French Polynesia; Nainoa Thompson, Pwo Navigator and CEO of the Polynesian Voyaging Society; Violet Sage Walker, Chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, USA; Ratu Epinesa Cakobau, Head of the Kubuna Confederacy and Fiji's highest traditional chief; Tommy Remengesau, former president and member of Palau's Council of Chiefs; Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation; and many, many more.



In March 2023, the petition was brought to the floor of the International Seabed Authority Council meeting in Kingston, Jamaica. This was a groundbreaking opportunity for Indigenous leaders to speak directly to ISA delegates. Tetiaroa Society's cultural director Hinano Murphy, along with Indigenous representatives from Hawaii, Cook Islands, Aotearoa, and Papua New Guinea, brought a profound new perspective to the deep sea mining debate and have helped change the course of the discussions.

For more information:

[Indigenous Voices for a Ban on Deep Sea Mining Petition](#)

[BCI Indigenous Voices Video](#)

[Greenpeace Press Release, July 2023](#)

[Greenpeace Press Release, March 2023](#)

[Uncle Sol and Hinano Murphy Intervention at the ISA, March 2023](#)

[Jonathan Mesulam intervention at the ISA, March 2023](#)

[Ratu Epenisa Cakobau Joins Call For A Ban On Deep Sea Mining](#)

# RESEARCH & PUBLICATION: WHITE PAPER “NEXT GENERATION EV BATTERIES ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR DEEP SEA MINING”

In October 2023, BCI published an important – and potentially game changing – paper entitled “[Next Generation EV Batteries Eliminate the Need for Deep Sea Mining](#).” Based on detailed research, the paper definitively refutes the mining industry’s claim that DSM is necessary to support the growing electric vehicle (EV) market and the green transition.

The paper demonstrates that the rapid market acceptance and growth of new batteries that don’t use metals mined from the deep sea eliminate the claimed need for deep sea mining. With this, the paper undermines the mining industry’s primary justification for destructive deep sea mining.



(including *Yahoo! Finance*, *Marketwatch*, *Autoblog*, *Morningstar*, *InvestorsObserver*, *Seeking Alpha* and *Finanzen.net*) and has received over 200,000 impressions. It was also noted in closing releases of the Fall session of the International Seabed Authority and in presentations at COP28.



## Next Generation EV Batteries Eliminate the Need for Deep Sea Mining October 2023

### Abstract

Advances in electric vehicle (EV) battery technology, and the accelerating adoption of these technologies, are leading to the replacement of EV batteries dependent on cobalt, nickel, and manganese. As a result, the deep sea mining of these metals is neither necessary, economically advantageous, or environmentally advisable. In fact, efforts to promote the mining of these metals in the deep ocean now serve neither manufacturers nor consumers, but only enterprises that have been established for the express purpose of deep sea mining. Typically, companies and consumers are asked to make sacrifices for the good of conservation and the environment. Now, happily, what is good for both enterprise and the end consumer, also serves the need to protect and preserve our oceans, and the life that resides within.

### Authors

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Stan Rowland

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Advances in electric vehicle (EV) battery technologies over the last several years have led to the widespread use of EV batteries that don't use cobalt, nickel or manganese – the primary metals that mining companies seek to mine from the deep sea. The popularity and rapidly increasing market share of these next generation batteries, which now represent a third of the global EV battery market, have undermined mining company arguments that deep sea mining (DSM) is necessary to support the growing EV market and have made the financial viability of DSM even more tenuous. These next generation batteries make it easy for regulators to make decisions to protect the ocean from the risks of DSM.

The paper was co-authored by UC Berkeley Professor and BCI Steering Committee member Dan Kammen and BCI’s Jeanne Everett and Stan Rowland. It gained widespread attention and was picked up by over 188 outlets worldwide

# DEEP SEA MINING OUTREACH & SPEAKING INTERVENTIONS

BCI's advocacy for a DSM moratorium has included a variety of education, communication, and outreach efforts, as well as presentations at the [International Seabed Authority](#) ("ISA") in Jamaica.

Of many presentations to various groups, one of our most important was an exclusive presentation to a United States Interagency Working Group organized by the White House and attended by over 30 representatives from the US State Department, the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and several others. This was a rare opportunity for us to speak directly with key decision makers.

Our work on the DSM moratorium has also included outreach through our [website](#), social media platforms, a [newsletter](#), and co-sponsorship of letters to government officials and [the UN Secretary General](#). Through this work BCI has become a respected and reliable leader and organizer.

For more information:

[Antarctic Climate Epic Expedition](#), Feb. 2023

[Vancouver IMPAC5 Conference](#) & Deep Rising film screening & Panel, Feb. 2023

[SF 20th International Ocean Film Festival](#) Deep Rising film screening & panel, Apr. 2023

[Atlanta Ocean Visions Summit](#) talk and poster presentation, Apr. 2023

[L.A. Earth Focus Environmental Film Festival](#) Deep Rising screening & panel, May 2023

[White House Interagency Working Group Briefing online](#), Jun. 2023

[Online presentation to the Climate Base Fellowship network](#), Nov. 2023

Interview for a documentary film on DSM, Bezat Video Group, Dec. 2023



# TRACKING PROJECTS WE HAVE SUPPORTED

The Blue Climate Initiative is proud to have helped accelerate several valuable ocean-based climate solutions through its “Community Awards for Ocean-Related Climate Solutions” and its “Ocean Innovation Prize.” We are sharing below updates from some of them.

## Winners of the Community Awards for Ocean-Related Climate Solutions

Prize money from the Blue Climate Initiative has enabled [Blue Action](#) (formerly known as Blue Action Lab) to move forward with bold efforts in ocean carbon dioxide removal (CDR) research and marine conservation. Last year, one of the lab users, Coral Vita, won the \$1 million Earthshot Prize.

Jeff Stoike, Blue Action Board member stated: "BCI's financial support was absolutely critical seed funding for the Blue Action Lab ... We were able to pay staff, develop the organization and expand our array of activities. The Blue Climate Summit was a peak experience in terms of professional community-building, cultural experience, and expansion of our sphere of concern on an international level. "



One of the projects Blue Action is supporting is an [Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement \(OAE\) project](#), a collaborative R&D effort with [Carbon to Sea](#) to systematically assess whether the enhancement process can safely and permanently sequester atmospheric carbon at scale. It is also harboring an aquaculture program for restoration, sustainable seafood and pearl culture.

[Futuro Sostenible](#) in Peru, which BCI supported through prize money, recently launched their first 100% electric fishing and research boat. This innovative boat serves as a highly valuable demonstration project.

## Winner of the Ocean Innovation Prize

Indonesia's [Biopac](#) manufactures biodegradable and edible bioplastics from seaweed. Since winning the Ocean Innovation Prize last year they have expanded their product range to include seaweed-based inks

In 2023, Biopac received Indonesia and US patents for their seaweed packaging manufacturing process. They are also in the final step of being awarded [TUV Certification](#) for home compostability of their products. In its first 3 years of operation, Biopac has sold over 3 tons of biodegradable product to 170 customers in 25 countries. By replacing conventional plastic with plant-based material, Biopac has prevented 18 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



# LOOKING TO 2024

2024 will be another critical year for ocean and climate action. In 2024, we will continue to be opportunistic in looking for the areas we can have the greatest impact. Our current plans are as follows::

## **Voice of the Ocean**

BCI and Tetiaroa Society will continue to help elevate Indigenous voices through high profile speaking engagements, coalition building, event organization, and communications.

The UN Ocean Decade has selected BCI to run an event at the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona in April 2024 to highlight opportunities for how Indigenous and traditional knowledge can work with science to advance ocean-climate solutions and ocean protection.

BCI also plans to facilitate the participation of Indigenous representatives at the International Seabed Authority meetings in March and July 2024.

## **Deep Sea Mining (DSM) Moratorium**

BCI will continue to push towards a DSM moratorium through work with governments, corporations (including automobile and battery manufacturers, and recyclers), Indigenous leaders, ports, NGOs, and the International Seabed Authority.

BCI is the lead organizer of an event at the March meeting of the International Seabed Authority in Jamaica which will bring global attention to the fact that existing alternate battery technologies and a rapidly growing battery recycling industry have eliminated the purported need to engage in destructive DSM. This will provide an opportunity for ISA delegates and the global community to hear directly from private sector – including battery and automobile manufacturers, recyclers, and financial institutions – regarding alternatives to DSM and the importance of protecting the ocean from destructive DSM.

## **Pan-Pacific Marine Protected Area**

BCI and Tetiaroa Society are in collaboration with Indigenous leaders on a plan to create a Pan-Pacific Marine Protected Area. This project started as an effort to create a “Polynesian Triangle” Marine Protected Area, but then expanded to bring in more Indigenous communities throughout the Pacific. A meeting of Indigenous Leaders is planned for Hawaii in February 2024 to further develop, refine and advance this project.

# LOOKING TO 2024, CONTINUED

## **Tahiti Wave Energy**

One of the projects that gained significant momentum and support at our 2022 Blue Climate Summit was a proposed wave energy competition and demonstration project in Tahiti that would coincide with the 2024 Olympic surfing competition in Tahiti. Since then, the project has been advanced by Ys Energies Marine et Developpement, the University of French Polynesia, and others. In light of the potential value of wave energy in addressing climate change, BCI intends to lend its support to the project in 2024.

## **Blue Climate Summit 2024-2025**

Building on the success of the 2022 Blue Climate Summit, we are working towards a follow-on Summit in late 2024 or early 2025. The expected theme for the Summit is “Blue Pathways to Net Zero: Uniting Science and Indigenous Voices for Ocean and Climate.”

This event will provide an important opportunity to advance programs in the leadup to the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, in June 2025. Like BCI’s 2022 Summit, this Summit will bring together international and local experts and stakeholders from a diversity of backgrounds including government, science and research, investment, Indigenous leaders, local communities, and youth.

# MEET THE TEAM



Stan Rowland  
CEO



Victoria Rowland  
Director of Strategic  
Partnerships



Lorin Fries  
Strategic Advisor



Jeanne Everett  
Director of Program  
and Operations



Kathy Maye  
Project Officer  
Operations

## Steering Committee



Richard Bailey  
Chairman &  
CEO, Pacific  
Beachcomber



Costas Christ  
Founder & CEO,  
Beyond Green  
Travel



Neil Davies  
Executive Director,  
University of  
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Victoria Rowland  
Director of Strategic  
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Blue Climate  
Initiative

## SPONSORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Blue Climate Initiative is a program of Tetiaroa Society, a US nonprofit organization that carries out scientific research, conservation and education programs on the island of Tetiaroa in French Polynesia. We are deeply grateful for our major sponsors including Richard Bailey, [The Brando](#) resort, and [Pacific Beachcomber](#).

For additional information about the Blue Climate Initiative, visit [www.blueclimateinitiative.org](http://www.blueclimateinitiative.org) or contact:

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Blue Climate Initiative relies entirely on donor support to carry out its work. Your support would be deeply appreciated! As a program of Tetiaroa Society, a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to support BCI can be made to Tetiaroa Society and will be deductible by US taxpayers to the full extent allowed by law.



To make a donation [click here](#) or scan the QR code.

