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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NOAA TO OPEN NEW WORLD CLASS MARINE SCIENCE FACILITY**

*Senator Inouye, Governor Abercrombie, NOAA Administrator Lubchenco, and NAVFAC Pacific Commander Rear Admiral Gregory to participate in facility blessing ceremony and announce tourism partnership*

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM --The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will open a state-of-the-art Marine Science and Storage Facility (Building 130) during a facility blessing ceremony at 11 a.m., Feb. 21, 2012, on Ford Island near the USS Utah Memorial, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, which is the site of NOAA's Pacific Regional Center.

Senator Daniel Inouye, Governor Neil Abercrombie, NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco and Rear Admiral Katherine Gregory will participate in the ceremony to commemorate the opening of the 37,000 square foot Marine Science and Storage Facility, which is the second phase of the Pacific Regional Center. It includes a 1,500 foot deep salt-water well for cooling needs as well as support of 15 marine tanks. The facility will enable NOAA and its scientific partners to conduct critical marine research, study and monitor data gathered throughout the Pacific Region, and provide a site to rehabilitate endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals and various green sea turtles.

The Pacific Regional Center consolidates 15 NOAA offices from around Oahu, and it is designed to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Standard. In addition to the blessing of the new Marine Science and Storage Facility, Lubchenco will also announce the establishment of a new partnership with the Oahu Visitors Bureau and the Waikiki Aquarium to integrate the Pacific Regional Center into an Ocean Education Experience program.

Media wishing to attend the ceremony must contact MC1(EXW) D. Wayne Randall, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office at 590-8363 before noon, Feb. 20, to arrange base access. All media will be escorted onto the installation.

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