

## Project Kaisei Launches Mission to the Plastic Vortex

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Environmental organization prepares to address the problem of floating plastic waste in the ocean

HONG KONG, April 29 /PRNewswire-Asia/ -- Project Kaisei, an environmental organization that has been established to address the problem of floating plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean, has announced it plans to embark on a 70 day expedition, between June and August 2009, to examine the Plastic Vortex, an area of the Pacific Ocean containing an estimated 4,000,000 tons of floating plastic waste in a mass that is twice the size of Texas, over 1,000 times bigger than Hong Kong, or nearly four times as large as Japan.

Sometimes referred to as the 'Eighth Continent', this plastic waste in the oceans is killing marine life, entering our food chain and growing daily. In the main seafood consuming nations of the world, which includes Hong Kong, China and Japan, the issue of plastics in our oceans, and the toxins they carry with them, is cause for growing health concerns.

The objectives of the return voyage from San Francisco to Hawaii are to study and document the plastic mass in the ocean and test catch methods for removing the plastic particles.

"The water in our oceans is like blood for our planet," said Doug Woodring, ocean and conservation expert from the Project Kaisei Hong Kong Team. "If we continue to fill it with toxins, such as plastic, it will be to the detriment of all life on earth. We feel strongly that the presence of the floating mass of plastic in the oceans needs to be brought to everyone's attention."

The Mission also hopes to understand what is needed to undertake an eventual large scale clean-up of the waste material and test the technology for conversion into fuel, an economically viable by-product. If the Mission proves successful, and large volumes of plastic can be captured and processed, then a full clean-up operational plan will be initiated within 18 months.

Sylvia Earle 'Explorer-in-Residence' National Geographic, Mission Programs, commented, "Solving a problem starts with knowing that you have one. Project Kaisei vividly shows how discarded plastics are clogging the ocean, causing a major problem for the planet's vital 'blue heart,' entangling marine life and insidiously killing as it accumulates in the food chain, from tiny plankton to great whales. Best of all, the mission highlights hope with ideas for positive action."

The Mission is being organized under the Ocean Voyages Institute, which is a non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of the Maritime Arts and Sciences and the Ocean Environment. Ocean Voyages Institute is a "501C3" California Registered Non-Profit Organization.

Project Kaisei is currently looking to raise US\$2,000,000 for the Mission from individual donations, family foundations and corporations.

The Mission will be supported by a comprehensive marketing campaign including a professionally produced documentary for National Geographic's international distribution, educational outreach, and Pacific Rim community support in order to raise global awareness of the Plastic Vortex's existence.

#### About Project Kaisei

Project Kaisei consists of a team of innovators, ocean lovers, sailors, scientists, sports enthusiasts and environmentalists who have come together with a common purpose. To study how to capture plastic waste in the ocean and how to capture, detoxify and recycle it into diesel fuel. This first research Mission, scheduled for the summer of 2009, will be critical to understanding the logistics that will be needed to make a successful clean-up operation possible as some of the technology required for such a feat has never been utilised under oceanic conditions.

Project Kaisei will examine the largest area of the Plastic Vortex, an ocean vortex, situated to the North East of Hawaii, and approximately five days by boat from the State or from San Francisco. The Mission will consist of two "swathes" through the Plastic Vortex, with the aim to remove approximately 40 tons of plastic from the ocean for experimental recycling.

For more information please visit: <http://www.projectkaisei.org/>

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SOURCE Project Kaisei

*Image: One of the sources of the Plastic Vortex. A beach in South East Asia. Photo by: Wallace J. Nichols*