

[Dan's post today](#) on ocean acidification discusses findings by an international scientific panel that ocean acidification is a very serious problem. This week, according to the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), the U.S. EPA just agreed to review whether and how the federal Clean Water Act can or should be used to address ocean acidification. According to [CBD's media release](#),

EPA's formal response to the Center's petition sets out a public process to evaluate ocean acidification's impacts on water quality, as well as to determine whether the current water-quality criterion for pH should be modified to address ocean acidification. EPA also agreed to develop biological assessment methods and other technical guidance relating to evaluation of the health of coral reefs, which are particularly threatened by ocean acidification.

It will be interesting to see how this process develops. The U.S. has been very slow to recognize any role for our basic federal environmental laws in addressing climate change. But these existing laws are important tools, even if they were not invented with this specific set of challenges in mind.