



OCEAN RESEARCH & CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

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# PRESS RELEASE

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## OCEAN RESEARCH & CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION TESTS FIRST KILROY ELECTRONIC WATER MONITORING SYSTEM IN FLORIDA'S INDIAN RIVER LAGOON

*Data From ORCA's Kilroy To Support Public Action To Protect Waterways  
Nationwide; Next Test Phase To Help Troubled Chesapeake Bay*

**Ft. Pierce, Florida -February 19, 2009** | The world's first network of ORCA's Kilroy water monitoring systems, the newest conservation tool being developed by the Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA) to provide more accurate water quality data than conventional sampling methods, will begin initial monitoring tests today in Florida's Indian River Lagoon. Later this year, a second planned test of ORCA's Kilroy technology is schedule for Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the U.S. and the nation's most imperiled marine ecosystem. "ORCA's Kilroy is brilliant," said Sylvia A. Earle, Ph.D., explorer-in-residence at the National Geographic Society. "The whole concept of a low-cost monitoring network is critically important for understanding the ocean so we can better protect it."

"Our priority is to revolutionize marine conservation by developing new technologies, such as ORCA's Kilroy system, that show measurable results and can increase effective community-led conservation," said Keith Paglen, co-founder and chief executive officer of ORCA. "Communities that rely on the water quality of nearby streams, rivers, lagoons and the ocean will use the real-time data reported by ORCA's Kilroy systems to reverse the failing health of their coastal waters and protect the precious habitat that fish, marine mammals and other wildlife require for survival."

Named after the fictional World War II cartoon character that accompanied Allied forces, ORCA's Kilroy monitoring system is the most comprehensive and affordable aquatic monitoring system that will empower governments and communities to develop and implement more informed conservation programs to address coastal water quality challenges. Slightly larger than a football and costing significantly less than other sensors, Kilroy nimbly monitors a water body's vital signs - flow, speed, direction, turbidity, temperature, salinity and the prevalence of key microorganisms, including those responsible for red tides associated with paralytic shellfish poisoning.

"Recent economic valuations estimate that the Indian River lagoon provides approximately \$3.7 billion per year in benefits to Florida's residents and visitors-and recreation-including fishing, boating and swimming-is the largest component of the Lagoon's economic value," said Congressman Thomas Rooney, "I'm interested in ORCA's

Kilroy technology because of its potential to help ensure these waters will remain healthy and vibrant for generations to come.” Congressman Rooney’s District includes parts of the Indian River Lagoon, which is one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America, straddling 156 miles of Florida’s east coast from Ponce Inlet in Volusia County, south to Jupiter Inlet in Palm Beach County. The tests will serve as the vanguard to additional development and deployment of ORCA’s Kilroy systems in waterways across the nation, including a second test site in the once healthy Chesapeake Bay.

As the nation’s first technology-based marine conservation organization, ORCA is dedicated to the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and the species they sustain through the development of innovative technologies and science-based conservation action. With support from the State of Florida, the Office of Naval Research, private foundations, government officials and concerned citizens, ORCA has developed the high-tech sensors and communications systems that are capable of detecting the presence of certain plants, animals and other factors to evaluate water quality.

Kilroy has already generated strong support from Florida lawmakers. Florida State Senator and current President of the Florida Senate Jeff Atwater (25th District) said, “I strongly support the efforts ORCA is making with its Kilroy Conservation Program. The completion of their cutting edge technologies will help address water quality challenges in the Indian River Lagoon, throughout Florida and ultimately nationwide. Identifying the types and sources of pollution affecting our waters is an important step in providing the community with the information necessary to effect positive change in water quality.”

“Deploying ORCA’s Kilroy in Florida’s Indian River Lagoon will provide tremendous benefits to that waterway’s ecosystem and ultimately to the coastal waters throughout Florida and those throughout the nation as well,” said Florida State Senator and past Senate President Ken Pruitt (28th District). “The success of ORCA’s Kilroy will yield many benefits to Florida’s research coast, from increased high quality jobs at ORCA and its partners, the opportunity to train engineering students at Indian River State College, improved property values and sustained fishing and tourism resources.”

“As an elected official, I am committed to preserving our state’s precious natural resources—including the waters of the beautiful Indian River Lagoon,” said Florida Representative Debbie Mayfield (District 80). “Invented here on the Treasure Coast, ORCA’s Kilroy monitoring system is a 21st century technology designed to help all of us ensure the health of Florida’s waters for generations to come.”

ORCA recently received a grant from the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties. “The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties is proud to award a grant to ORCA from our Environmental Endowment Fund in support of



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the “Kilroy” system,” said Leslie Lilly, President and CEO. “The innovative “Kilroy” system will for the first time create data that will allow for greater accountability to clean water protection regulations, having a transformative effect on water protection and conservation in South Florida and beyond.”

The Florida based nonprofit also received a \$1 million proactive grant from the Pennsylvania-based Claneil Foundation, whose mission is to create healthy communities. The grant will be used to pilot the Kilroy initiative in the Chesapeake Bay in collaboration with researchers from the University of Maryland and the Smithsonian Institution.

“In the Indian River Lagoon, Chesapeake Bay, or anywhere else ORCA’s Kilroy technology is deployed, scientists and the public will receive valuable water quality information displayed on intuitive website interfaces,” said Dr. Edith “Edie” Widder, co-founder, president and senior scientist of ORCA. “With accurate and scientifically defensible information, we then can engage local communities in developing better marine conservation management solutions against threats such as red tide. Through continued monitoring, we will show them the positive impact that their actions are having on their marine environment.”

Conservation managers throughout Florida are working to help the organization develop the technology. Gil McRae, Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, says “ORCA’s Kilroy technology will soon give Florida’s resource managers and conservation community a totally new and cost effective tool for monitoring aquatic ecosystem characteristics, especially fine scale water flow data as well as the ability to track biological organisms in real time, including certain species that form harmful algal blooms. We are delighted to be collaborating with ORCA on this project.”

The Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA) is dedicated to the study and protection of marine ecosystems and the species they sustain through the development of innovative technologies and science based conservation action. An IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, ORCA operates from two Florida locations: the Duerr Laboratory for Marine Conservation housed within the Indian River State College on the Fort Pierce Inlet and ORCA’s Conservation Technology Center in Port St. Lucie. Learn more about ORCA’s innovative conservation technologies at [www.teamorca.org](http://www.teamorca.org).

The Environmental Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties addresses programs that seek to preserve and improve the watersheds, habitat, natural resources, and urban environment of the two-county area. It supports people and ideas that are committed to education and outreach that result in environmental awareness and improved quality of life. To learn more, please visit [www.yourcommunityfoundation.org/environment](http://www.yourcommunityfoundation.org/environment).



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The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) operates the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), a research division within FWC. FWRI operates programs statewide that focus on obtaining the wide-ranging data and information needed by fish, wildlife, and ecosystem resource managers. FWRI has established many collaborative partnerships with other government, academic, non-profit, and private fish and wildlife research institutions. Their programs are diversely funded from user fees such as hunting and fishing licenses, specialty license plates, grants, and state general revenue and are organized to rapidly provide the vital scientific information necessary to conserve and protect Florida's precious natural resources.

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