



To: The Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority,

From: Earth Law Center

Date: 7 August 2024

Re: Application for Observer Status at International Seabed Authority by Earth Law Center,
Durango, Colorado, United States of America

Dear International Seabed Authority:

Please see the below information in consideration of Earth Law Center's application to receive observer status at the International Seabed Authority. We look forward to hearing back.

A. Information about the organization

- 1. Name of Organization:** Earth Law Center
- 2. Address of headquarters:** 530 Main Ave, Suite F Durango, CO 81301 USA
- 3. Address of all branches and/or regional headquarters:**
 - a. 319 East 8th St Apt 1B New York, NY 10009, USA
 - b. Andrews Street, Rumuobiakani, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
 - c. Primrose Corner, Church Lane, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9NY, England
- 4. Telephone number:** +1-510-566-1063
- 5. Fax number:** N/A
- 6. Email address:** info@earthlaw.org
- 7. Name, title and contact details of focal point:** Grant Wilson, Esq., Executive Director.
Phone: 510-566-1063. Email: gwilson@earthlaw.org
- 8. Background information on the organization:**

Founded in 2008, Earth Law Center (ELC) is a cutting-edge legal nonprofit (501c3) working toward a paradigm shift in environmental law. ELC works to advance Earth-centered laws and policies that restore Nature to health. We advocate for a transformation in our legal,

governance and economic systems, and the relationships, values, ethics and beliefs that create their foundation. ELC engages in Earth law movements including the Rights of Nature, human environmental rights, legal guardianships of Nature, rights of future generations, animal rights, and more.

9. Is the organization a member of, affiliated to or otherwise associated with another organization that has been granted observer status with the Authority? - Yes, see answers to questions 10 and 11.

10. Is the organization affiliated to consultants of the Authority, contractors with the Authority, entities in connection with the law of the sea, the offshore and deep-sea, mining industry, research institutes or the mineral marketing and processing industry?

ELC is a member of or has consultative status with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).

11. Relationships with intergovernmental organizations

ELC is a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations Harmony with Nature Initiative, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation

ELC's blog posts are linked to the ELC website: <https://www.earthlawcenter.org/blog>. Blog posts range from topics of legal cases, ecocentric philosophy, and issues surrounding the Earth and animals' wellbeing.

ELC has written an Earth Law Textbook: *Earth Law: Emerging Ecocentric Law—A Guide for Practitioners*. It is a book for students and practicing lawyers who seek to preserve a habitable planet and question whether current environmental law is up to the task. Earth law is the emerging body of ecocentric law for protecting, restoring, and stabilizing the functional interdependency of Earth's life and life-support systems. You can find more details on our textbook here: <https://aspublishing.com/products/zelle-earthlaw>

ELC has written a Deep Sea Report that proposes giving deep-sea species a seat within the ISA's Council and Assembly to formally represent their wants and needs. This could be achieved by selecting a proxy or guardianship body to represent the best interests of deep-sea species and ecosystems.

ELC has published three peer-reviewed articles on Ocean Rights, covering topics including the UN Ocean Decade in [PLOS Biology](#), shark conservation in [Sustainability](#), and overfishing in the *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*.

B. Interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly

13. Briefly outline how your organization intends to demonstrate its interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly, including by answering questions 14 to 17 and by providing any other relevant information related to the application for observer status.

ELC is looking to become an observer in order to be a voice for the ecosystems and Earth during deliberations. Being an observer would allow ELC to help contribute to ISA's effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed-related activities. ELC has been involved in working towards positive legislation in areas of Ocean, River, and marine animal rights across the globe, making us knowledgeable and conducive in furthering the ISA's work.

14. Briefly outline whether and how the purposes or activities of the organization relate to the work of the Authority.

ELC is dedicated to ensuring the rights of Earth, its ecosystems, and animals, which can be seen through our work on campaigns across the world fighting for these rights. In North America, ELC worked towards calling for the recognition of the inherent rights of the Southern Resident Orcas and the ecosystems upon which they depend. In Chile, we have been a part of the Ríos Protegidos Initiative that seeks to strengthen the River protection and restoration in Chile through the interdisciplinary and collaborative work of its members. In Africa, ELC has worked towards gaining rights for the Nile River Basin and the River Ethiope in Nigeria. Globally, ELC has championed for Ocean Rights and, in partnership with The Ocean Race, Ocean Vision Legal, the Government of Cabo Verde, UNDP, IUCN, and others, have become mobilizing leaders

towards restoring our relationship with the ocean through the recognition of a Universal Declaration of Ocean Rights or similar, by 2030. Since the launch of the Genova Process in 2022, ELC has co-facilitated 8 international Innovation Workshops to gather stakeholders of all backgrounds to contribute to the development of the initiative.

15. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the work of the Authority, for example by providing specialized information, advice or expertise, or by identifying or helping to procure the services of experts or consultants.

ELC is a leading expert on Earth centered legal movements and regularly consults national governments on innovative legal protection for the ocean. For example, ELC has worked with the government of Panama on legislative protection of sea turtles and their rights. ELC partnered with The Leatherback Project to Support Sea Turtle Conservation Efforts in Panama and submitted a formal request that Rights of Nature be added to Panama's law. In 2023, this law to protect sea turtles which includes reference to their rights passed. This is just one of many examples of ELC's work in the legal and governmental field that has succeeded and benefited the Earth and its ecosystems.

16. Briefly outline whether and how your organization has the expertise and the capacity to contribute, within its field of competence, to the work of the Authority, in particular in connection with the law of the sea, the protection of the marine environment, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, technology, minerals processing and marketing, activities in the Area and marine scientific research in the Area.

Besides being a leader in progressing Earth centered legislation, ELC has provided its own work in oceans related issues, such as creating a new report that advocates for oceans justice in plastic treaties. This report advocates for a justice-centered approach to the treaty on plastic pollution and emphasizes that ocean justice—comprising the protection of the ocean, the fulfillment of human rights, and the progression of social equity—is crucial for achieving an effective agreement. The report serves as a vital advocacy tool, highlighting how the full lifecycle of plastics disproportionately harms the ocean and marginalized communities and thus demands a response grounded in justice. ELC's Report fills a critical gap in advocacy, offering a roadmap toward a plastics treaty that ensures justice for the ocean and affected communities,

protecting human rights and progressing social equity. We have an entire team dedicated to studying Earth-centered legal innovations to protect marine ecosystems around the world, including for the deep sea.

17. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the capacity- building programmes and initiatives of the Authority (e.g., Secretary General's award, voluntary commitments of the Authority).

ELC has technical expertise in a wide variety of international, national, and local marine law and policies. These expertise can be used in discussions of initiatives surrounding legal strides for protecting ecosystems that are harmed by deep-sea mining and related activities. Whether it be writing reports or legislation, ELC can provide guidance in ensuring it will protect deep sea ecosystems and animals. We find that governments regularly consult us on environmental laws and policies, and we would be pleased to serve this role.