CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources, Council Chair
John Garamendi, Lieutenant Governor, State Lands Commission Chair
Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Darrell Steinberg, State Senator, Ex officio Member
Pedro Nava, State Assemblymember, Ex officio Member

June 14, 2007

Mike Carrier, Natural Resources Policy Director
900 Court Street, N.E.
Salem, Oregon 97301

Jay Manning, Department of Ecology Director
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, Washington 98504-7600

Dear Directors Carrier and Manning,

On April 17, 2007, the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) held the first public workshop on the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health that was signed by the Governors of Washington, Oregon and California on September 18, 2006. The meeting provided the OPC the opportunity to hear public testimony regarding the agreement and the discussion paper released on March 15, 2007. The OPC received testimony from representatives of the three states, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and members of the public.

An overarching recommendation is for the three states to aggressively support the creation of a national trust fund to support ocean and coastal protection and management activities. This was the number one priority of both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. Such a fund will be essential for the long-term implementation of the actions recommended below.

The following is a list of specific recommendations the OPC believes are appropriate for the Action Plan scheduled for release this fall. The recommendations apply to the priorities identified in the March 15 discussion paper.

West Coast Priority 1: Ensuring clean water and healthy beaches

- **Marine Debris - The OPC recommends that the three states set a marine debris reduction goal to be achieved by a date to be determined.**
  Marine debris is a significant threat to ocean wildlife and habitat. In addition to the leadership taken by the OPC in adopting a resolution for reducing marine debris, other agencies in California are taking action. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board is considering a "zero trash" goal by 2013 that proposes a 40 percent reduction of trash discharges in the Los Angeles River in the first year and subsequent annual reductions of 10

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (916) 653-5656 Fax: (916) 653-8102 Email: COPCpublic@resources.ca.gov
http://resources.ca.gov/copc

percent until a zero target is attained. These initial steps could serve as guidelines for debris reduction targets for the region. Although the OPC recognizes that coordinating regulatory language among the three states may be difficult, marine debris does not stop at state or national boundaries and regional reduction efforts would greatly benefit from regional collaboration.

- **Non-Point Source Pollution - The OPC recommends that the three states make the reduction of non-point source pollution to the ocean a regional priority. In particular, OPC supports enforcement of water quality laws and full federal funding support for key non-point source pollution programs.**
  OPC staff has already made the reduction of non-point source pollution a priority and its Water Quality Enforcement Task Force is working on recommendations on how to improve enforcement of water quality laws. President Bush recommended zero funding for the Coastal Non-Point Source Program in both the FY07 and FY08 budgets; however, each of the three states has already called on the President and Congress to provide sufficient federal funding to address the threat of non-point source pollution along the entire West Coast. For example, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requested adequate funding for non-point source pollution programs in his March 2007 appropriations request letter to Congress. In addition, the three governors sent a letter on June 6, 2007 to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees urging restoration of FY 2008 funding for the coastal non-point pollution control program.

West Coast Priority 2: Protecting and restoring ocean and coastal habitats

- **Sea Floor Mapping - The OPC proposes that the three states work together to create a high-resolution map of the seafloor in all state waters along the West Coast.**
  We currently know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the bottom of the ocean. In order to better understand ocean processes, we need an accurate map of our seafloor. Seafloor mapping will help us design the best possible marine reserves, understand sediment transport systems and better understand the dynamics of marine species in a complex ecosystem. High-resolution bathymetric maps are also important for oceanic modeling, which will allow for the development of better forecasting of ocean responses to natural and anthropogenic stressors. Benthic maps will serve as important baseline information for future regional actions and as a mechanism to measure ocean management effectiveness. However, completing maps for the entire coast represents a substantial investment, one that may be supplemented by federal investments if the three states work together.

- **Sulfur Emissions - The OPC recommends that the three states urge U.S. EPA to establish a sulfur emission control area (SECA) off the West Coast to reduce sulfur emissions from West Coast shipping.**
  The largest uncontrolled fossil fuel source of sulfur air pollution in California is the burning of residual oil as fuel in oceangoing vessels. These vessels are also a large source of sulfur

pollution in Oregon and Washington. This challenge can be better addressed if the three states work together.

West Coast Agreement Priority 4: Reducing adverse impacts of offshore development

- **Alternative Energy - The OPC recommends that the three states collaborate with the federal Departments of the Interior and Energy and with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to develop a coordinated plan to evaluate the potential for and impacts of new renewable ocean energy projects off the West Coast.**
  The ocean can be the source of vast amounts of clean, renewable energy by harnessing the power of tides, waves, currents, and the wind. Ocean energy could be a significant part of the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, ocean energy infrastructure that is placed in the marine environment can disturb or kill marine life, pose a threat to navigation and degrade scenic ocean front views. The environmental impacts of these technologies must be weighed against their benefits. While specific priorities may be different in each state, many of the issues associated with ocean energy are the same.

West Coast Agreement Priority 6: Expanding ocean and coastal scientific information, research and monitoring

- **Regional Scientific Research - The OPC supports the creation of a regional ocean and coastal research plan in cooperation with the Sea Grant Program, with a particular emphasis on the impacts of climate change.**
  The OPC is working closely with the California Sea Grant Program to improve scientific understanding in high priority issue areas. California, Oregon and Washington are home to some of the top marine research institutions in the nation. The coordination of scientific information and priorities among the three states can significantly expand the overall quantity of data in the field and promote the exchange of scientific information between the three states. The impacts of climate change on the coast and ocean are likely to be severe and this should be one of the primary areas where we focus research attention. Sea level rise associated with climate change, for example, will increase coastal flooding, saltwater intrusion and erosion of beaches, bluffs, habitats, and coastal infrastructure.

- **Coordinated Ocean Monitoring - The OPC recommends that the three states develop a regional ocean observing system that would provide essential information on ecosystem health.**
  Despite the growing threats to our ocean, there is no single, coherent monitoring network in place to assess their status, track changes over time or determine the success of our management efforts. Continuous collection of basic ocean data provides information to help us manage threats. Regional coordination of observing capabilities and data integration will help ensure that priorities are adequately addressed, that funding is secured and that government agencies managing ocean resources have access to appropriate data products and tools.

West Coast Agreement Priority 7: Fostering sustainable economic development throughout our diverse coastal communities

- **Sustainable fisheries - The OPC recommends that the three states examine the California Fisheries Fund to determine if it could serve as a model for fisheries reform in all three states.**
  In December 2006, the OPC voted to provide seed money to establish the California Fisheries Fund. Historically, many fisheries have suffered from boom-and-bust cycles or steady declines in fish landings, revenue and employment. The Fisheries Fund was created to combat these problems. The Fund will offer loans to California fishing groups and businesses to assist them with a transition to more environmentally and economically sustainable fishing practices and governance. Commercial fishing continues to be an important part of all three states' history, economy and culture. The Fisheries Fund, if successful, could greatly improve fisheries management and ocean health along the West Coast.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on the development of the action plan by the end of 2007.

Sincerely,

Mike Chrisman

Mike Chrisman
Secretary for Resources
Council Chair