WEST COAST GOVERNORS' AGREEMENT on OCEAN HEALTH

WASHINGTON OREGON CALIFORNIA

http://www.westcoastoceans.gov

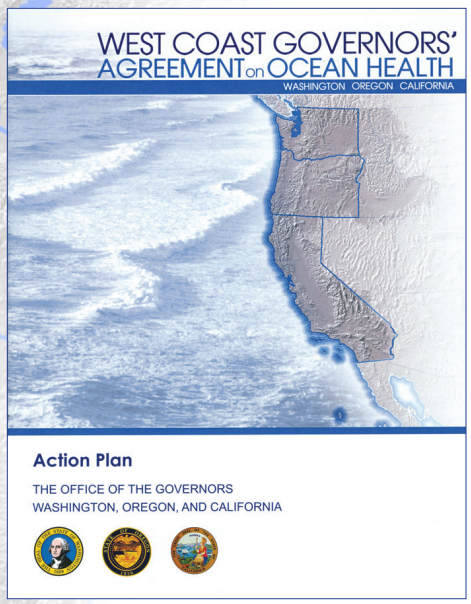
The West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health is a proactive, regional collaboration to protect and manage ocean and coastal resources along the entire West Coast. Launched on Sept. 18, 2006 by Governors Gregoire of Washington, Kulongoski of Oregon and Schwarzenegger of California, the Agreement advances regional ocean governance. Such regional partnerships were a main recommendation of both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission.

The agreement seeks to advance the following goals:

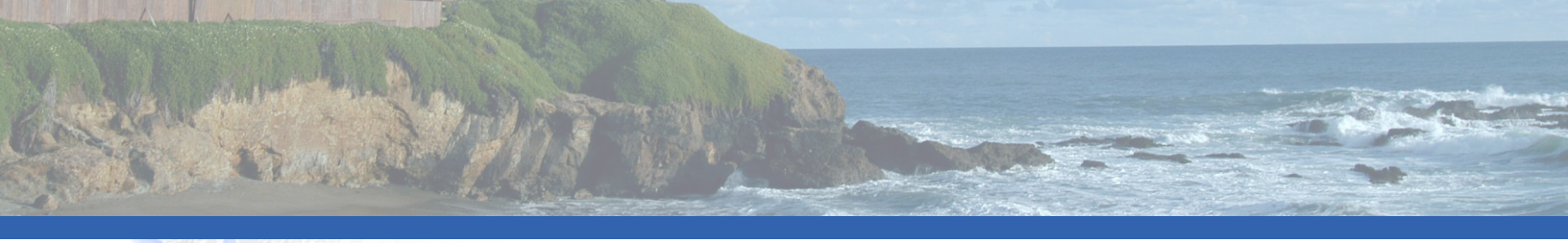
- Ensuring clean coastal waters and beaches
- Protecting and restoring ocean and coastal habitats
- Promoting the effective implementation of ecosystem-based management
- Reducing adverse impacts of offshore energy development
- Increasing ocean awareness and literacy among residents
- Expanding ocean and coastal scientific information, research, and monitoring
- Fostering sustainable economic development in our communities

After extensive public participation and close coordination with three federal co-leads from the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency, the Governors released their Action Plan in July 2008. The Action Plan highlights two overarching actions: 1) establish a national ocean trust fund and 2) mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. In addition to these overarching actions, there are 24 visionary actions within the following areas:

- Polluted runoff
- Harmful algal blooms and hypoxia
- Marine debris
- Oil spill prevention and response
- Maritime shipping emission controls
- Habitat protection and restoration
- Marine invasive species
- Ecosystem-based management
- Offshore oil and gas operations
- Alternative environmentally sustainable energy development
- Ocean awareness and literacy
- Regional marine research
- Ocean observing and long-term monitoring
- Seafloor mapping
- Working waterfronts and sustainable coastal economies
- Regional sediment management



In late 2008, nine Action Coordination Teams (ACTs) were established comprised of representatives from the three states, as well as other federal, tribal, industry, academic, and NGO entities. Draft work plans were released earlier this year for public comment. Final action plans geared toward achieving the WCGA vision are anticipated to be released this fall.



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Accomplishments as of February 2009.

- **Overarching Action 2: The three states, along with USGS, NOAA, and the US Army Corps** are tasking the National Academies of Science to complete a study that will provide consensus sea level rise estimates for California, Oregon, and Washington for the years 2030, 2050 and 2100. The NAS committee will evaluate each of the major contributors to global sea level rise and where possible, provide specific values for the regional and local contributions to sea level rise along with related uncertainties.
- **Action 1.1: West Coast Estuaries Initiative** grant funding awarded. USEPA Regions 9 and 10 received $15 million in 2007 and 2008 to provide grants to improve coastal water resources.
- **Action 1.3: West Coast Regional Harmful Algal Bloom Summit** in February 2009 focused on ways to improve harmful algal bloom monitoring, forecasting and response coast-wide at this National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sponsored event.
- **Action 1.6: Supported passage of HR 802**, the Maritime Pollution Prevention Act of 2007, for stricter global shipping emission standards to protect communities living near ports. A subcommittee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted more stringent emission standards on October 9, 2008 – a positive first step in securing full IMO adoption.
- **Action 2.4: A successful alternative energy workshop** in 2008 in Portland laid the foundation for the three states and federal counterparts to begin thinking about the governance that is needed to support new uses of the ocean and how to ensure sustainable development. Another workshop will be held this October in Seattle to provide input on marine spatial planning (MSP) needs for offshore renewable energy development along the west coast and to develop a west coast siting report, a prioritized action highlighted in the draft action plan.
- **Action 3.2 Integrated Ecosystem Assessments (IEAs)** initiated in Puget Sound and laid the foundation for the development of the California Current IEA.
- **Action 6.1: Sea Grant programs** in Washington, Oregon and California released a NOAA-funded report, *West Coast Regional Marine Research and Information Needs*.
- **Action 6.3: Seafloor mapping workshops** were held in Washington and Oregon in January and March 2008. With urging from Governor Gregoire, the Navy lifted long-standing restrictions on access to seafloor data collected by NOAA.

In May 2009, the Governors requested $5 million in federal support for a grant program to advance key priorities of the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health Action Plan in areas such as climate change adaptation, alternative energy, water quality, ocean and coastal research and mapping, ecosystem-based management and habitat protection and restoration. Federal funding may be used for the following activities:

Climate Change	Assessment of sea level rise adaptation strategies, development of a coastal climate change adaptation guidebook for local government, and pilot communities to promote coast-wide adaptation planning.
Polluted Runoff	Training for six coastal communities aimed at solving polluted runoff problems, including the use of Low Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure techniques and creation of a West Coast Partnership on LID.
Marine Debris	Establish the West Coast Marine Debris Alliance to support and enhance prevention and removal of marine debris through increased tri-state collaboration and funding of high priority projects.
Spartina Eradication	Eradication efforts focused on core infestations in Humboldt Bay, California and the Siuslaw Estuary, Oregon and early detection and elimination efforts along entire West Coast.
Integrated Ecosystem Assessments	Four sub-regional integrated ecosystem assessments (IEA) will be initiated: Puget Sound (started), Coastal Oregon, Central California, and Southern California. These efforts will be used towards building a California Current-wide IEA and a workshop for technical and informational input for a west coast IEA.
Ocean Energy	Support appropriate siting of renewable ocean energy by assessing feasibility along the West Coast; compile regional environmental and human use data and fill data gaps; monitor pilot projects; assess cumulative impacts; and distribute data for decision-making.
Ocean Education	West Coast-wide model guidance document for K-12 teachers on how to improve students' ocean literacy while teaching mastery of state and federal science standards.
Sustainable Communities	Develop demonstration projects for ports, communities, and industry groups to improve energy and water usage, reduce waste, and improve marketability of products.
Regional Sediment Management	Funds for sharing tools and technology needs for enhanced regional sediment management planning.