



STATE OF WASHINGTON
GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE POLICY OFFICE
100 Insurance Building, PO Box 43113 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3113

March 28, 2012

The Honorable Nancy Sutley
Co-Chair, National Ocean Council
Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality
Executive Office of the President
722 Jackson Place NW
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable John Holdren
Co-Chair, National Ocean Council
Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
722 Jackson Place NW
Washington, DC 20503

Re: Comments on the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan

Dear Chairs Sutley and Holdren:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Ocean Council's (NOC) *Draft National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan*. As a member of the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA), Washington State affirms its support for the WCGA's comments on the Implementation Plan and for the federal government's efforts to strengthen regional ocean partnerships (Coordinate and Support – Action 1). Within the context of these regional priorities, we are writing to underscore some specific examples of work underway in our state that relate to the effective implementation of the National Ocean Policy, and to highlight actions in the Implementation Plan that are important to near-term progress in Washington state.

Governor Gregoire and NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco recently announced a joint Shellfish Initiative to address permitting, restoration and research issues facing resource managers and the shellfish industry. As part of this initiative, the Governor also announced establishment of a blue ribbon panel on ocean acidification comprised of scientific experts, government agencies, tribes, shellfish growers and others to provide recommendations to address this growing problem in Washington's marine waters. These efforts can serve as a pilot and help the NOC achieve its proposed milestones under the proposed National Shellfish Initiative (Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding – Action 2) and under ocean acidification (Climate Change and Ocean Acidification – Action 2).

In 2007, Governor Gregoire initiated a major effort to restore Puget Sound to health by 2020. The Puget Sound Partnership leads an innovative planning process that helps guide the priorities and activities in this marine water body, and secured effective coordination across federal, state, local, tribal and private entities. While many Puget Sound priorities connect with actions proposed in the draft Implementation Plan, our approach to ecosystem based management of the Sound provides a good opportunity for demonstrating key principles in the National Ocean Policy (Ecosystem-Based Management – Action 4).

Washington adopted a law on marine spatial planning in 2010 and has been working initial steps related to identifying and filling data gaps, engaging stakeholders through a newly formed coastal advisory body, and establishing effective governance through improved mechanisms for coordinating with coastal treaty tribes. In order to make progress on marine spatial planning on Washington's Pacific Coast, we need priority attention to the following types of information:

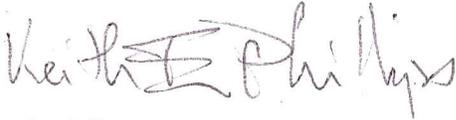
- Social and economic information. Basic information on human use patterns and trends, economic valuations, job assessments, social and economic indicators, and access to and translation of traditional and cultural knowledge, are key to the successful and sustainable protection and management of ocean resources (Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding - Action 4). Washington is working with NOAA to map the footprint of current human uses in our marine waters. In addition, we are looking to identify ecological, social and economic indicators. Progress in this area would showcase how federal work on integrated ecosystem assessments can support state and regional planning efforts.
- Physical and resource data to support planning for marine renewable energy. Resource managers considering energy siting proposals need data on physical processes and biological resources, as well as research on impacts of new technologies. It would be helpful if the NOC could increase access to relevant data by conducting active outreach to partners and by providing data in readily useable formats such as GIS maps (Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding – Action 2).
- High resolution seafloor mapping off of Washington's coast. Procuring seafloor data is a high priority for Washington because it provides critical information on habitat, geology, and other seafloor features needed to move forward with spatial planning. It would be helpful to establish a mechanism for engaging states, regions, and tribes in the process for prioritizing seafloor mapping work, as these entities have local knowledge to contribute (Observations, Mapping and Infrastructure – Action 5).

Healthy marine ecosystems are essential to the economic and social benefits we derive from them, as underscored by the draft implementation plan. The National Ocean Council should clearly identify the importance of sustaining coastal tribes and coastal communities and highlight activities designed to achieve that goal throughout the implementation plan. For example, planning efforts should seek to integrate new, marine uses in ways that do not cause significant harm to the sustainable management of traditional, existing uses.

Letter to: Chairs Sutley and Holdren
Page 3

The National Ocean Policy encompasses many of the priorities and activities of Washington State and the West Coast region. These shared priorities provide a great opportunity to ensure vibrant coastal communities and healthy oceans both now and for future generations. We look forward to continuing to partner with the West Coast States and the National Ocean Council on effective implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "P".

Keith Phillips
Governor Gregoire's Energy and Environment Advisor

cc:

Richard Whitman, Oregon Governor's office
Secretary Laird, California Resources Agency