

## **Washington Shellfish Initiative Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel Charter**

### **Purpose**

Governor Christine Gregoire is convening a Blue Ribbon Panel to address the effects of ocean acidification on Washington's shellfish resources. The Panel is being convened under the auspices of the Washington Shellfish Initiative, the regional partnership created to implement the National Shellfish Initiative. Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is strongly supportive of the Governor's Shellfish Initiative and this Panel, as expressed in her letter to Governor Gregoire dated February 7, 2012.

As announced in December 2011, the Washington Shellfish Initiative is an agreement among federal and state governments, tribes, and the shellfish industry, to restore and expand Washington's shellfish resources, to promote clean-water commerce, and to create family-wage jobs. The initiative calls for:

- Expanding, promoting and improving shellfish aquaculture in Washington;
- Increasing opportunities for and improving access to public tidelands for recreational shellfish harvesting;
- Restoring native shellfish habitat and populations, such as the Olympia oyster and pinto abalone; and
- Improving and protecting water quality to help ensure healthy and safe shellfish for consumers.

Acidified marine waters have been linked to the recent crisis in larval supplies in the Northwest's shellfish industry, underscoring the need for additional research and policy development. The Blue Ribbon Panel is comprised of scientific experts, public opinion leaders, state, federal, tribal, and local policy makers, and industry representatives. The Panel will point the way to advancing our scientific understanding of the effects of ocean acidification and will help shape our response to this pressing problem, strengthening the link between science and effective management of our natural resources.

The Panel will make recommendations to the Governor and Administrator, regional research groups, and other policy-makers, regarding additional research and monitoring needs and actions to understand, prevent/mitigate, and adapt to acidification of Washington State marine waters.

## **Key Objectives and Outcomes**

The Panel will:

1. Review and summarize the current state of scientific knowledge of ocean acidification pertinent to Washington State, including anticipated consequences on shellfish and other marine species. The review should summarize existing research, building on the work presented at the 2011 Washington Sea Grant Ocean Acidification Symposium.
2. Identify research and monitoring needed in Washington to increase our scientific understanding and strengthen the linkage between science and management actions.
3. Develop recommendations for actions to respond to increasing ocean acidification and reduce the harmful effects on Washington's shellfish industry and other marine resources. Recommendations should emphasize the use of existing laws and regulations and better coordination of existing policies and programs, and focus on actions that complement, build on, and reinforce existing regional and state activities, rather than creating new programs.
4. Identify opportunities to improve coordination, strengthen existing partnerships, and develop new partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries, levels of government including the Tribes, and with non-profit organizations and private businesses, and to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean acidification and how to address it.

## **Process**

- The Panel will be led by its two co-chairs, supported by a dedicated facilitator and a staff coordinator. The Department of Ecology and the Washington Sea Grant Program will provide administrative management and support.
- Panel members will participate in a series of one-day in-person meetings, and additional briefings conducted in-person and by web-conference, as needed.
- All Panel meetings will be open to the public. Meeting announcements and all materials considered by the Panel will be posted to a project website, housed on the Department of Ecology public website with a link to the Washington Sea Grant public website. A SharePoint site or equivalent will be available to Panel members and support staff to manage the review and revision of Panel products.
- The Panel will seek consensus on specific recommendations, where possible. If consensus cannot be reached, opinions of individual members will be respected and

reflected in the final report. The strength of Panel support for recommendations will also be noted in the report. These procedures may be amended by the Panel, and additional procedures may be established, as needed.

- The Panel will recommend steps to advance the scientific understanding of ocean acidification and actions to prevent/mitigate and adapt to the effects on Washington's marine waters. The Panel is asked to sort recommendations based on relative priority and time frame, ranging from near-term to long-term.
- The Panel will deliver its report to the Governor and Administrator by October 1, 2012.

### Timing

The first meeting of the Panel will be held on March 30, 2012, with five additional in-person full-day meetings to be held during the next six months. Separate briefings, conference calls and webinars may be scheduled if the need arises. For planning purposes, the following draft schedule and meeting emphasis are suggested:

March 30, 2012	1 <sup>st</sup> Panel meeting (foundational briefings, scope and schedule)
April 2012	Conference call – update on science and current policy framework
May 2012	2 <sup>nd</sup> Panel meeting (science recommendations)
June 2012	3 <sup>th</sup> Panel meeting (policy recommendations)
July 2012	4 <sup>th</sup> Panel meeting (priorities, report conclusions/messages)
September 2012	5 <sup>th</sup> Panel meeting (finalize report)
October 1, 2012	Target Date for the Panel's Final Report