

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We are writing to respectfully request that you include \$5 million in the Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to support on-the-ground actions from the Action Plan released by West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health on July 29, 2008.

On September 18, 2006, Governors Schwarzenegger (California), Kulongoski (Oregon) and Gregoire (Washington) signed the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health, demonstrating their collective commitment to protecting the health of the West Coast's ocean and coastal ecosystems and the economies that depend on them. The Action Plan for the agreement was released on July 29, 2008 upon approval by all three governors.

Implementation of the Action Plan will require a successful collaborative effort and sharing of resources between the three states and the federal government. Priorities in the action plan include maintaining healthy coastal communities, protecting marine habitat and estuaries, and increasing marine technology and research. While the activities will be focused on the ocean and coast, the benefits will extend into the interior of each state, because sound ocean and coastal management supports tourism, recreation, port operations, and other commerce activities that provide billions of dollars every year to each state.

The WCGA advances regional ocean governance efforts as called for in the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The agreement seeks to advance the following goals:

- Ensure clean coastal waters and beaches;
- Protect and restore ocean and coastal habitats;
- Promote the effective implementation of ecosystem-based management;
- Reduce adverse impacts of offshore energy development;
- Increase ocean awareness and literacy among residents;
- Expand ocean and coastal scientific information, research, and monitoring; and
- Foster sustainable economic development in our communities.

These goals reflect the priorities of a wide range of citizens in California, Oregon, and Washington. The three Governors worked closely with representatives of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Interior to develop the plan and will continue to collaborate with the interagency Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources to act on the actions identified in the document. Indeed, moving from planning to on-the-ground action will require additional federal resources.

This funding request is consistent with federal funding appropriated for other regional efforts. In 2005, President Bush's Ocean Action Plan indicated support for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, and since that time the administration and Congress have provided additional federal funding to support the Alliance's activities. According to our colleagues in the Gulf of Mexico, federal funding has been critical to implementing the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts.

Last year, Leon Panetta and Admiral James Watkins (co-chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative) gave coastal states a grade of "A-" on their national ocean activities report card for the progressive work that we are doing to protect our oceans, specifically the progress made on regional partnerships such as the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health.

We urge you to sustain this forward looking federal-state partnership by providing the requested \$5 million to support the implementation of the Action Plan in Fiscal Year 2010.

Sincerely,



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



David Wu
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Brian Baird
Member of Congress