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December 28, 2010

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

We are writing to suggest a bold new approach to reducing or eliminating marine debris along the West Coast of the United States and within the North Pacific Ocean. We believe that major progress could be achieved through a collaborative effort between the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health (WCGA), the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and countries and sub-national governments within the Pacific Rim. We commend NOAA for its leadership on marine debris reduction to date and believe that the time is right for this broader collective effort, which would provide both economic and environmental benefits to communities throughout the Pacific Rim.

Unfortunately, plastics and other ocean debris continue to pollute the waters off our shores and within North Pacific Gyre causing significant effects on marine life and potential negative impacts on our fisheries. Studies have demonstrated that this debris comes from both land and ocean based sources within the Pacific Rim. This problem is something we can, and should, be able to address. In this regard, the WCGA and the PCC recently adopted a detailed action plan to reduce marine debris along the West Coast and have provided initial funding for its implementation. These funds will be used to support a variety of measures to reduce the introduction of marine debris, including coast-wide efforts to promote product stewardship and reduce materials that contribute to marine debris.

We would like to coordinate our West Coast marine debris reduction efforts with NOAA and other Pacific Rim governments. One vehicle for achieving this could be the Pacific 2020 Challenge initiated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Pacific 2020 mission is to promote "a healthy and bountiful Pacific Ocean that sustains the livelihoods and

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco

December 28, 2010

Page 2

cultures of the Pacific peoples and contributes significantly to the health and economic vitality of the world.” President Anote Tong of the Republic of Kiribati made a special plea for unity and coordination across the Pacific to address these issues in his remarks at the “California and the World Ocean ’10” conference in San Francisco, California, this past September.

We understand that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and NOAA will host the 5th International Marine Debris Conference in late March 2011. We would like the opportunity to assemble representatives of Pacific Rim governments and IUCN at this event to engage in a coordinated effort to reduce or eliminate marine debris within North Pacific waters. We realize that time is short, but we are willing to work with you to convene such a session if you agree with this approach. Please let us know, at your earliest convenience, if you think this initiative is something we can pursue for inclusion in the program for this international event. Feel free to have staff follow-up with Lisa DeBruyckere, WCGA Coordinator, at lisad@createstrat.com or (503) 704-2884 on this proposal.

Once again, thank you for your strong leadership to help us rid the oceans of marine debris once and for all and for the attention and support you have provided to the West Coast Governors’ Agreement on Ocean Health and the Pacific Coast Collaborative. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California



Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor of Oregon



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington

cc: The Honorable Gordon Campbell, Premier, British Columbia, Canada
The Honorable Neil Abercrombie, Governor, Hawaii
The Honorable Sean Parnell, Governor, Alaska
The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality
Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
David Osborn, Coordinator, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, United Nations Environment Programme
Carl Gustaf Lundin, Head, Global Marine Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Mary Beth West, Director, Washington DC Office, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Kris McElwee, Pacific Islands Marine Debris Coordinator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration