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April 13, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Senator Shelby:

We, the governors of California, Oregon and Washington, are committed to working together to improve the oceanic health off the West Coast. Last year, we released our action plan for the *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health*. As recommended by both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, our action plan uses a collaborative approach to address some of our region's most pressing ocean and coastal management challenges, such as preparing coastal communities for the effects of climate change. We respectfully request \$5 million in federal support in FY2010 to assist with plan implementation.

We entered into this historic partnership to address critical ocean and coastal protection and management issues on September 18, 2006. The *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health* affirms our commitment to work together on seven priority issues:

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

The *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health* is designed to help address the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission,

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which called for implementation of regional ocean governance through joint state, local, tribal and federal efforts. Regional approaches can advance federal interests in ocean management through coordination with other levels of government by providing direct resources to address the unique needs of a region, as well as integrated, efficient and effective management of ocean resources.

Central to our agreement was a commitment to developing a specific action plan for the West Coast. Our plan advances key priorities of the *U.S. Ocean Action Plan* in areas such as water quality, ocean and coastal research and mapping, coastal pollution and habitat protection and restoration. We worked closely with representatives of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 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 as we act on the tasks identified in the document. Indeed, moving from planning to implementation will require federal resources.

As mentioned earlier, we are therefore respectfully requesting federal support to help implement the action plan for the *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health*. Specifically, we seek \$5 million in FY2010 for grants to be administered by NOAA for our three states to take action on activities identified by the plan.

Our 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 Bush administration and Congress provided millions in federal funding to support the Alliance's activities. According to our colleagues in the Gulf of Mexico, federal support has been critical to implementing the Gulf of Mexico Alliance *Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts*.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, composed of members of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Ocean Commission, gave states and regional ocean governance initiatives an A-grade in its *2007 U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card*. The *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health* is specifically called out in the report as a noteworthy example of reform in regional ocean governance.

Thank you for considering our request for \$5 million for implementation of the *West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health's* action plan. These actions will improve the economic and environmental health of the West Coast, and therefore of the nation.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California



Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor of Oregon



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington