



CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

April 17, 2007

The Honorable Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire,

Thank you for your letter of April 10, 2007 and congratulations on launching the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health. In the spirit of cooperative conservation, the President's Ocean Action Plan of December 2004 committed to supporting regional collaborations on ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes policy in partnership with leadership from States, localities, and Tribes.

Much has been accomplished since the President released his Ocean Action Plan. Federal agencies, in collaboration with State, Tribal, and local governments, the private sector, international partners, and other interests, continue to achieve meaningful results by

- Enhancing Ocean Leadership and Coordination
- Advancing our Understanding of Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes
- Enhancing the Use and Conservation of our Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Resources
- Managing our Coasts and their Watersheds
- Supporting Maritime Transportation
- Advancing International Ocean Science and Policy

In support of the regional initiatives in the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes and other areas, Federal agencies have worked closely with their State counterparts to develop action plans based on regional/State priorities. These partnerships are proving to be successful models in addressing critical regional and State priorities and will lay the foundation for enhanced collaboration in the future.

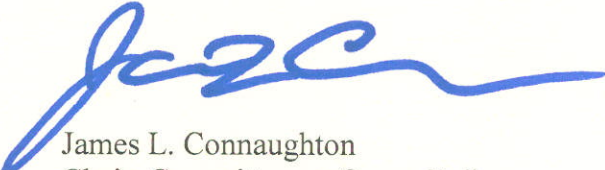
Many partnerships and activities are also well underway between California, Oregon, Washington and the Federal agencies. Through the West Coast regional effort, I am confident that together we can further develop recommendations and initiatives that will leverage and enhance these existing partnerships, achieve results in the near term, and strengthen the foundation for addressing priority issues in the region over the long term. We look forward to help you complete the development of specific actions by fall of 2007 and move to implementation.

To accomplish this, I agree with you that improved coordination among Federal agencies and strong communication between States and Federal agencies are important. Therefore, building on our national efforts for enhancing ocean leadership and coordination we will strengthen coordination of Federal programs in the region.

We also will develop and maintain regular communication as a foundation for strong State/Federal partnerships. We were pleased to begin discussions on the seven priority issues in your West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health, and look forward to a series of regular meetings/discussions. The Cabinet Committee on Ocean Policy and its subgroups, particularly the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources and its three federal leads, remain committed to a strong dialogue, the establishment of an effective and efficient process for federal coordination in the region, and meaningful collaboration between Federal agencies and California, Oregon, and Washington to address the seven priority issues in your agreement and make our oceans and coasts cleaner, healthier, and more productive.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Committee on Ocean Policy, I look forward to working with you on the West Coast regional effort.

Yours Sincerely,



James L. Connaughton
Chair, Committee on Ocean Policy