

December 12, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper PC, MP  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A3

Dear President Obama and Prime Minister Harper,

In October of this year, we, the leaders of British Columbia, California, Oregon, and Washington signed the “Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy” (attached). Among the fourteen actions we set forth in the plan, is an effort to enlist support for research on ocean acidification and to take action to mitigate its impact. There is an urgent need for the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to bolster our ongoing regional and cross-border efforts to address this critical issue with enhanced federal coordination, monitoring, and research support.

As you know, the oceans are getting more acidic as they absorb carbon dioxide from human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. This fundamental change in ocean chemistry is already having serious impacts on marine ecosystems and industry, and these impacts are expected to lead to irreversible losses to our region’s commercial, recreational and culturally important marine resources.

Ocean acidification is often discussed as the global lowering of ocean pH, resulting from oceanic uptake of fossil fuel-derived CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. However, local drivers, including processes such as upwelling and nutrient loading from land-based sources, also contribute to acidification. Global and local processes converge in areas along the West Coast, and these ‘hot spots’ of corrosive water are becoming more frequent. As a result, the West Coast is being impacted earlier and harder than other regions of North America, and indeed the planet.

Along the West Coast, industry leaders, scientists from across disciplines, fishermen, first nations, tribes, coastal communities and public interest groups are all aligned

and committed to understanding this issue and reducing its impact. State governments and regional efforts have catalyzed action and raised awareness of the potential impacts of ocean acidification, providing for unprecedented collaboration, including the following:

- The West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel, comprised of leading experts from three states and British Columbia, is presently undertaking the work of framing this complex issue coast-wide on behalf of decision-makers;
- The West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health (WCGA), the regional ocean partnership for the U.S. West Coast has identified ocean acidification as one of four priority areas. The WCGA has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the West Coast Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems, bolstering the systems' efforts to collaborate on data collection and dissemination;
- The State of Washington's Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification called on Congress, the White House, NOAA, and other federal agencies to support a research agenda so the nature of the acidification problem facing Washington State and the majority of other coastal states can be better understood and more effectively addressed. The State of Washington is currently investing in research and monitoring through its newly created Washington Ocean Acidification Center;
- The California Current Acidification Network (C-CAN), comprised of stakeholders, decision-makers and scientists, promotes and encourages academic collaboration and communication broadly.

While the West Coast jurisdictions are taking vigorous actions to understand and address acidification, the scope of the challenge merits increasing Canadian and U.S. federal investment in monitoring, research and coordination. The health of our oceans is vital to our economies; this threat to ocean health will require state, regional, federal and international cooperation on an unprecedented scale. We need to act now. Specifically, we request that you:

1. Continue funding of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act and the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act (FOARAM) passed by the U.S. Congress in 2009 and funded only to September 30, 2013. We appreciate that your FY13-14 proposed budget, President Obama, included this key funding and we encourage you to augment support in FY14-15.
2. Ensure continued Canadian and U.S. federal investments in critical physical and biological co-located monitoring. These efforts, particularly offshore monthly transects, have already yielded breakthroughs in our understanding of oceanic processes on ecosystems including species of economic value. Expanding and coordinating this monitoring along the West Coast will further jumpstart our

understanding of the impacts of ocean acidification and provide empirical data to develop forecasting models.

3. Provide funding to build off the West Coast's efforts to develop biogeochemical models that elucidate the drivers of acidification and thus support identification of regulatory options to mitigate its impacts.
4. Assist in developing resource management tools and strategies, in partnership with the states and provincial government, including modeling linked to climate change.
5. Convene a face to face meeting of U.S. and Canadian federal and state/provincial agency heads to collaborate and identify the most strategic choices moving forward.

British Columbia, California, Oregon, and Washington recognize that by working in partnership, we can achieve much more in understanding the issue of ocean acidification and reducing its impact. Yet it will take a concerted effort at all levels of government to combat this threat to our marine ecosystems and the economies and communities they support.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue for Pacific North America.

Sincerely,



Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor of California



Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia



John Kitzhaber  
Governor of Oregon



Jay Inslee  
Governor of Washington

cc: Acting Administrator Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Administrator Gina McCarthy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
The Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Attachment: [Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy](#)