



July 10, 2009

Brian Baird, Assistant Secretary for Ocean and Coastal Policy, California
Jessica Hamilton, Natural Resources Policy Advisor, Office of Oregon Governor Kulongoski
Kathleen Drew, Executive Policy Advisor, Office of Washington Governor Gregoire

Via electronic mail to comments@westcoastoceans.gov

RE: PISCO Comments on the draft report “West Coast Governors’ Agreement (WCGA) on Ocean Health Executive Overview: Action Coordination Teams’ Draft Work Plans for Public Comment”

Dear Mr. Baird, Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Drew,

The Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) commends the efforts of the West Coast Governors Agreement to develop an effective work plan to implement the priority goals of this groundbreaking legislature.

The PISCO consortium supports these efforts to develop a transparent multi-stakeholder approach in developing programs that coordinate science and management across state boundaries. These actions will greatly enhance management and protection of the rich marine resources in the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME). In particular PISCO would like to support the development of work plans regarding coordination of a West Coast integrated ecosystem assessment (IEA) and supporting sustainable coastal communities. As this process continues, PISCO is pleased to offer any support, knowledge, and expertise that will help toward these goals and the stated priorities within the plan.

PISCO is a consortium of twelve lead marine research scientists and over one hundred staff and postdoctoral and graduate students at four academic institutions along the U.S. west coast (www.piscoweb.org). The following are comments from PISCO.

General Comments

1. This document shows individual work plan summaries that aim to fulfill the stated goals of the WCGA. To fill priority 3 as stated on the WCGA “*Promoting the effective implementation of ecosystem-based management of our ocean and coastal resources,*” PISCO urges that other measures such as spatial zoning requirements and socio-economic assessments will be viewed as cross-cutting themes to be addressed by all work plans and have the support of a centralized Action Coordination Team (ACT) to determine implementation across work plans.

2. To achieve priority 6 as stated on the WCGA “*Expanding ocean and coastal scientific information, research, and monitoring*” and priority 2 as stated on the WCGA “*Protecting and restoring healthy ocean and coastal habitats,*” it is imperative to conduct regular monitoring to prevent shifting benchmarks in ocean health. PISCO urges the rapid implementation of the proposed coast wide IEA that will encompass physical and biological indicators. This IEA should be supported by a plan for continued bi-annual monitoring to regularly assess the state of change on the West Coast related to climate, other anthropogenic activities or related environmental factors. This IEA/ monitoring plan will indirectly fulfill many of the major tasks assigned by individual draft work plans.

Specific Comments on the draft report “West Coast Governors’ Agreement (WCGA) on Ocean Health Executive Overview: Action Coordination Teams’ Draft Work Plans for Public Comment”

Climate Change ACT Draft Work Plan (Page 6)

The impacts of climate change extend beyond ‘what gets wet.’ Although the “development of a west coast-wide assessment of shoreline changes” is important, one must consider all the changes associated with climate, particularly those affecting ocean circulation and ocean chemistry. These can drastically influence shoreline and coastal resources and must be included in the draft action plan. For example, over the last few decades, it has been firmly established that processes occurring in the deeper coastal ocean and in the large-scale oceanic eastern boundary upwelling systems (e.g., CCLME) profoundly affect nearshore rocky intertidal and kelp forest ecosystems. These systems are linked through the transfer of material to and from the shore by coastal currents, for example the supply of nutrients to shore and the dispersal of invertebrate and fish larvae from nearshore habitats out into the deep-ocean ecosystems. Climate change and variability simultaneously impact both the large-scale eastern boundary upwelling systems and shoreline habitats and must be assessed in tandem in order to fully understand shoreline changes.

Major Task 3 (Page 7)

PISCO looks forward to more information about the process for developing the next phase of this process, to “*Describe the observed and anticipated ecological and ecosystem effects of SLR, storminess, and extreme events on coastal habitats.*” Much of PISCO focus is on the impacts of climate change to coastal ecosystems using interdisciplinary physical and biological research methods. We may be able to assist in providing decision makers with the best-possible science for wise policy and resource-management decisions.

Renewable Ocean Energy ACT Draft Work Plan (Page 22)

Major Task 2 (Page 23)

The use of spatial zoning tools would be particularly applicable to this priority task.

Major Task 7 (Page 25)

Outreach and education should be given the same priority as major tasks 1, 2 and 3. Ocean energy will be a publicly contentious subject regarding ecological and socio-economic

impacts. This transparency will keep stakeholders and interested parties abreast of all new developments building trust between affected parties.

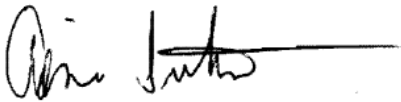
In conclusion,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft document. We look forward to future discussions as the planning proceeds. For more information about the PISCO program and these comments, please contact Kristen Milligan at (541)737-8862 or Kristen.Milligan@science.oregonstate.edu.

Sincerely,



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