



Leadership now
for a sustainable tomorrow

**Offices of the Governors of California, Oregon and Washington
Office of the Premier of British Columbia**

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

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

RE: Support for an integrated ocean observing system

Dear President Obama and Prime Minister Harper,

In 2008, the leaders of Alaska, British Columbia, California, Oregon and Washington signed the Pacific Coast Collaborative Agreement, the first agreement that brings together all the Pacific coast leaders in the United States and Canada as a common front to set a cooperative direction into the 21st Century. Out of this agreement was born the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC) -- a formal basis for cooperative action, a forum for leadership and information sharing, and a common voice on issues facing Pacific North America.

With a combined population of 52 million people and a Gross Domestic Product of \$2.5 trillion, our jurisdictions are poised to emerge as a mega-region and global economic powerhouse driven by innovation, energy, geographic location and sustainable resource management, attracting new jobs and investment while enhancing an already unparalleled quality of life.

As our economies and populations grow, the uses of our coastal waters increase and become more diverse. At the same time, we are faced with the unknown consequences of a changing climate. These pressures intensify the need for accurate, timely, and relevant ocean information to guide our use and stewardship of ocean resources.

For these reasons we are writing to strongly urge the continued and increased investment of federal governments in the development, implementation, and long-term maintenance of an integrated ocean observing system. These include:

- the operational ocean observing systems for societal and management applications, e.g., the Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems that are part of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) for Washington-Oregon (NANOOS), California (CeNCOOS, SCCOOS), and Alaska (AOOS); and
- the scientific research-focused regional cabled seafloor observatories in British Columbia (e.g., Victoria Experimental Network Under the Sea (VENUS), North East Pacific Time-Series Undersea Networked Experiments (NEPTUNE) and the U.S. Ocean Observatory Initiative efforts in Washington, Oregon and California (e.g., Regional Scale Nodes (RSN), Monterey Accelerated Research System (MARS)).

The system operates through a coordinated network of regional systems linked with local stakeholders and regional, federal, tribal and international partners. Full implementation of this system along the west coast of North America will be critically important for our economic development, public health and safety, and management of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Regional ocean observing systems deliver valuable information products to the ocean users and managers that need them. The scientific and management issues served by well conceived, sustained measurements of the coastal ocean and its ecosystems are broad and continually evolving, but important examples include:

Safe and efficient marine operations. The record-breaking oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has clearly demonstrated the value of ocean observations in emergency response efforts. Observing infrastructure and sensors, including high-frequency radar surface current mapping and autonomous underwater gliders, have contributed significantly to responders' estimates of surface and subsurface oil plume trajectories. Similar assets on the west coast would guide response efforts here and therefore must remain active.

Meanwhile, mariners around the country – from fishermen, commercial shipping companies, and bar pilots to recreational boaters – continue to rely on a suite of accurate and timely ocean observations to increase the safety and economic efficiency of their operations. Satellite communication systems and internet-based dissemination allow these data to be available at their fingertips 24 hours a day.

Climate change adaptation. By tracking essential climate parameters at regional scales, ocean observing systems are documenting the local effects of climate trends and the regional variability in water temperature, water levels, waves, storms, surface currents, shoreline change, and water chemistry (dissolved oxygen and acidification). These long-term records are improving localized forecasts of potentially damaging events, like El Niño-driven storms, and serving as a baseline for climate change adaptation planning on the west coast of North America.

Ecosystem-based management and planning. Observing systems provide a comprehensive look at physical, chemical and ecological processes in the coastal ocean and their changes over time, facilitating adaptive management through the regular synthesis of data in intuitive, map-based products. The timely analysis and dissemination of this information allows regional managers to prioritize planning needs, reduce costs, and evaluate the effectiveness of management actions. This information also should be summarized and reported regularly to the public. These capabilities will

prove valuable as the west coast moves forward with various coastal and ocean planning initiatives including the federal U.S. framework for Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.

In advocating for the continued development of an integrated ocean observing system, the Pacific Coast Collaborative joins a broad group of in government, private industry, and non-governmental supporters. Just as we recognize that a regional approach to cooperative action will enhance our ability to respond to challenges facing our economies, environments, and citizens, we also understand that the natural systems in which we live and thrive – watersheds, coastlines, and ocean ecosystems – are dynamic, shared assets that must be more fully understood in order to be managed effectively. Therefore, we enthusiastically support the long-term maintenance of an integrated ocean observing system and its monitoring assets.

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

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

GORDON CAMPBELL
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
GOVERNOR OF OREGON

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

CHRISTINE GREGOIRE
GOVERNOR OF WASHINGTON

cc: Secretary Gary Locke, Department of Commerce
Secretary Ken Salazar, Department of the Interior
Administrator Lisa Jackson, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
The Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment
California, Oregon, and Washington Congressional Delegations