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## **Media Availability and Statement, The Ocean Conference**

### **West Coast leaders announce commitments to address threats posed to U.S. coastal communities by ocean acidification**

NEW YORK, NY (June 6, 2017) – The U.S. States of California and Washington are joining other government and affiliate members of the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification ([OA Alliance](#)) at UN Headquarters this week at The Ocean Conference on behalf of the [Pacific Coast Collaborative](#) (PCC). The PCC, an intergovernmental partnership of British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California, created the OA Alliance to bring together governments around the globe to combat ocean acidification and changing ocean conditions as an immediate and critical threat to coastal economies and ecosystems.

Attending the conference on behalf of the OA Alliance are John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources, Ken Alex, Senior Advisor to California Governor Jerry Brown, and Julie Horowitz, Senior Advisor to Washington State Governor Jay Inslee.

The OA Alliance will announce their voluntary commitment to the implementation of United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 14.3, which addresses ocean acidification and the threats it poses. Along with their West Coast Partners, they are calling on UN member nations to act on ocean acidification by investing in research and monitoring, exploring adaptation and mitigation strategies to changing ocean conditions, engaging in public outreach and education, and making deeper commitments to reduce carbon emissions to protect the economic and cultural resources at risk in coastal communities around the world.

“California considers climate change to be a threat not only to our coasts, but to the world,” said California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird, representing California in the OA Alliance. “The impacts of ocean acidification threaten our fisheries and ecosystems along the West Coast. Inaction is no longer an option, and we are committed to work towards a zero-carbon emissions economy that will invest in our future and stem the tide of alarming climate-related changes in our oceans. Through these collective agreements, we can tackle this global threat.”

Ocean acidity has increased by 30 percent since the industrial revolution and is expected to double over pre-industrial levels by the end of this century as a result of the ocean absorbing one-third of the atmospheric carbon dioxide generated by human activities. More alarming, based on extensive laboratory and field studies conducted worldwide, significant impacts on fisheries and marine ecosystems have already been documented due to ocean acidification and will worsen in the future. From juvenile oyster die-offs in the Pacific Northwest to coral reef bleaching in the Caribbean and South Pacific Ocean – impacts are already being felt by coastal communities around the world. Last week, a [study](#) in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Scientific Reports revealed that the waters off the Pacific Northwest coast are among the most rapidly acidifying in the world.

Representatives from the OA Alliance in attendance at The Ocean Conference are available for print,

television and radio interviews and can speak to:

- The business and fisheries impacts that the U.S. West Coast has already experienced due to ocean acidification.
- How cities, states, provinces, countries, Tribes, businesses and NGO's have banded together as the OA Alliance to work collaboratively to combat OA.
- Their states' voluntary commitments for UN SDG 14 and their own plans for addressing ocean acidification. Of note, Washington State developed an OA Action Plan in 2012 – the first jurisdictions worldwide to do so – and is investing in research and monitoring, and implementation of actions to address OA.
- The importance of international climate agreements that will reduce carbon emissions- the number one cause of ocean acidification.

Voluntary commitments from OA Alliance members include the following:

- [The OA Alliance](#), which was formed to create a network of governments working collaboratively to tackle the global problem of ocean acidification and ensure that this threat is addressed in future climate agreements.
- [State of California](#), whose Governor Jerry Brown has been vocal about his state's commitment to combating climate change over the past several years.
- [State of Washington](#), the first government in the world to make official plans to combat OA.
- [State of Oregon](#), where OA was discovered to be directly impacting coastal shellfish growers and who is a founding member of the PCC and the OA Alliance and co-convenor of the West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel.

“Ocean acidification is already negatively impacting the West Coast. We know that healthy oceans sustain jobs, support coastal economies and feed billions of people. Now all of this is at risk and will cause great damage to our shellfish industry and coastal communities,” Washington State Governor Jay Inslee said. “We must take action now to reduce carbon emissions to secure the health of the oceans. We stand with nations and subnational governments around the world ready to take bold action to protect these resources for future generations.”

The OA Alliance will also host an official Side Event in Conference Room 6 at UN Headquarters on June 8 from 3-4:30 p.m. to tell the story of the U.S. West Coast shellfish industry, one of the first global examples of ocean acidification and how it could impact coastal communities; hear from UN countries France, Chile and Tuvalu, and what OA Alliance members are putting forward as voluntary commitments and OA action plans specific to their regions toward implementing SDG 14.3.

For more on the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, please visit <https://www.OAalliance.org>

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