

2007 SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

“Oregon’s Ocean: Resources and Opportunities ”

Panel II: “Oregon's Ocean Policy ”

Bob Bailey, Program Manager for the Ocean and Coastal Management Program, State DLCD
Jessica Hamilton, Natural Resources Policy Advisor to the Governor
Representative Deborah Boone, Chair, Legislative Coastal Caucus

Providing an "historical view" of ocean management in Oregon, Bailey gave credit to Governor Oswald West for the start of coastal conservation with the public beach law of 1913. He recounted the important legislation of the 1970s resulting with NOAA approval of Oregon Coastal Management Program in 1977.

Thereafter a series of legislation has made Oregon a leader in state ocean management. In particular is Statewide Planning Goal 19 on ocean resources, adopted 1977, and substantially revised 2000, which addresses the state waters 3 nautical miles wide.

Bailey raised the question of climate change-an uncertainty about the function and health of the ocean. He cautions that in order to meet our ocean goals, "Oregonians must set aside cherished opinions, revisit strongly held views, listen to each other, and keep the big picture in mind."

Representing Governor Kulongoski's views for a sustainable coast and ocean, Hamilton reported his goal is to secure the long term health and stewardship of Oregon's ocean ecosystems, resources, and ocean-related economy. He believes that is consistent with the findings of the two national ocean commissions on the need for a regional, ecosystem-based approach. Accordingly, Oregon has joined Washington and California in a regional ocean pact which addresses a number of priority issues.

Hamilton explained some of the science behind marine reserves on a global inventory: there are 124 sites in at least 45 countries. Marine reserves have been under study for several years in Oregon. In 2002 after two years of research, discussion, and public meetings, the Ocean Policy Advisory Council recommended a "limited system of marine reserves in order to test and evaluate their effectiveness."

In June 2007, the Governor provided specific guidance to OPAC regarding development of a public process to establish Oregon's marine heritage sites. OPAC has given this definition: "A marine reserve is an area within Oregon's state territorial sea that is protected from all extractive activities, including the removal or disturbance of living and non-living marine resources, except as necessary for monitoring or research to evaluate reserve condition, effectiveness, or impact of stressors such as climate change."

Hamilton reported the public nomination of marine reserves to begin next January and OPAC to advise the Governor by Fall 2008. Following that will be state agency rulemaking in order to report to the Legislature by January 2009.

Based on her work at the last legislative session, Boone declared Oregon has the potential to become a national leader in alternative energy legislation. She said her aim is to create more job opportunities in rural Oregon while reducing dependence on fossil fuels-jump starting alternative sources such as wave energy.

Boone said the last session passed laws that will help our state prepare for emergencies such as natural disasters. The Coastal Caucus-composed of eight legislators from the coast-met regularly to discuss, then introduce, legislation to protect fisheries and local economies. During the interim, Boone said she will continue to work with the Governor on sea floor mapping, and on other ocean issues in her capacity as chair of the interim committee on emergency preparedness and ocean policy.