

## **Report: West Coast needs more research on fisheries, marine science, climate change**

Los Angeles - According to a new report on regional marine research and information needs, the West Coast critically needs more research about fisheries, ocean health, coastal hazards and climate change - among other topics - to support and protect the region's annual \$32-billion ocean-related economy, according to a new report prepared by the region's four Sea Grant programs. The report, *West Coast Regional Marine Research and Information Needs*, is available online at: <http://www.usc.edu/org/seagrant/RegionalPlan.html>

Washington, Oregon, and California, as well as state, federal and tribal agencies, partnered with the University of Southern California (USC) Sea Grant program to develop this report. The Sea Grant report aligns with the Action Plan of the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health.

"California is eager to have this report and to focus on the next step, which is prioritizing our investment in the agreed-upon highest priorities in a meaningful way," says Dr. Amber Mace, the science advisor to the California Ocean Protection Council.

The document grew out of an extensive process of public workshops and surveys in all three states during 2007 and 2008. Nearly 1,000 ocean and coastal stakeholders - representing interests ranging from coastal residents, businesses, fishing industry, community organizations and decision-makers to conservationists, scholars and resource managers - took part in the effort to identify the region's needs, providing over 5,300 comments.

"What is remarkable about the report is that it draws on such a rich database of what ocean stakeholders feel is important to understand about the ocean," says Phyllis Grifman, Associate Director of USC Sea Grant. "The study was regional in scope but the way the data was collected allows us to also look at the local level."

The resulting report is a 56-page document that sorts West Coast research needs into eight categories:

- Vitality of coastal communities and marine operations
- Ocean and coastal governance and management of multiple uses
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Marine ecosystem structure and function
- Ocean health and stressors
- Physical ocean processes, related climate change and physical coastal hazards
- Water quality and pollution
- Resilience and adaptability to hazards and climate change

Additionally, stakeholders identified the need for a deeper understanding of climate change, attention to ocean education and literacy, and broader access to data and information as cross-cutting priorities across all research topics.

The West Coast effort is one of 10 NOAA is supporting across the country in response to recent studies and reports from groups such as the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative calling for a regional approach to coordinating, planning and setting priorities for ocean and coastal science.

The University of Southern California Sea Grant Program supports an integrated program of research, education, and public outreach to help people understand, responsibly use, and conserve ocean and coastal resources. For more information on USC Sea Grant research and outreach, please visit: [www.usc.edu/go/seagrant](http://www.usc.edu/go/seagrant).

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