

Why Work Together?

Historically, state coastal and ocean management policies and activities were often conducted on an issue-by-issue basis. In 2003 and 2004, the Pew Oceans Commission and U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy identified a global crisis of the oceans and an urgent need to act immediately. In their reports, they stressed the importance of regional collaborations to support ocean and coastal management on an ecosystem level. To address those growing concerns, a number of multi-state partnerships are coalescing across the country. As expressed in the commissions' reports, regional multi-state arrangements are important for addressing coastal and ocean issues that are intrinsically interconnected because they are within the same large marine ecosystem. Ocean currents and marine species do not recognize the jurisdictional or political boundaries where one state (or nation) ends and another begins. On the West Coast, the states of Washington, Oregon, and California are poised to collaborate – and have already begun to cooperate – on the key issues affecting major estuaries and the coastal ocean waters driven by the California Current, which connects all three states.

The Agreement seeks to advance the goals of the following Priority Areas:

- 1. Clean coastal waters and beaches**
- 2. Healthy ocean and coastal habitats**
- 3. Effective implementation of ecosystem-based management**
- 4. Reduced impacts of offshore development**
- 5. Expanded ocean and coastal scientific information, research, and monitoring**
- 6. Increased ocean awareness and literacy among the region's citizens**
- 7. Sustainable economic development of coastal communities**