

APPENDIX E

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife **Climate and Ocean Change - OAH Council Letter**



**The Oregon Coordinating Council on
Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia**
SECOND BIENNIAL REPORT APPENDICES





Date: July 9th, 2020

To: Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Re: Letter of Support for Adoption of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Agency Climate and Ocean Change policy

Good afternoon,

As a Co-Chair of the legislatively created [Oregon Coordinating Council on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia](#) (or “OAH Council”), I appreciate the opportunity to offer a letter of support for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s newly drafted Climate and Ocean Change policy. This proposed agency policy relates to ongoing adaption and resiliency goals within the [Oregon OAH Action Plan 2019-2025](#), and will aid the State in supporting prioritization of OAH research and science-based management of key species and habitats in light of changing climate and ocean conditions. As a co-chair of the OAH Council, I highly encourage the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to vote “yes” on adopting this important climate and ocean policy directive. To build the brightest future for the ocean and its species and the communities that depend on them, and, despite uncertainty, we can and must act now in a pro-active way that will improve ecosystem and community outcomes for resilience.

Oregon is among the first places in the world to observe direct impacts of OAH, due to our unique geographic and oceanographic context, putting our fragile marine ecosystems and coastal communities at risk. Our nearshore waters are home to sport and commercial fisheries, and contain critical nursery grounds for important species including Dungeness crab, salmon, sea urchin, abalone, rockfish, oysters, and others – all critical marine resources which are managed by the agency. Ocean and climate change, including OAH, are expected to increasingly hinder Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s ability to achieve its agency mission and meet its statutory mandates to our native fish and wildlife.

In September 2018, the OAH Council submitted their [first biennial report to the Oregon Legislature](#), which directly identified the need to reduce carbon dioxide and other emission sources, support resiliency within Oregon’s ecosystems, and coordinate climate and ocean management coordination (see Theme 2, Theme 3, and Theme 5 of the 2018 report). The currently proposed policy would offer an enormous opportunity to ensure that ODFW implements a strategic response that improves protections for our fish and wildlife while providing critical management framework for our state’s understanding of larger regional climate change impacts.

The OAH Council appreciated the ODFW's inclusive and transparent process in developing the Climate and Ocean Policy and for allowing the wider environmental community to provide feedback on early drafts of the policy. The results of increasing OAH have had far-reaching consequences, for both the ocean ecosystem and the economy, consequences that we, as a society, are only just beginning to understand and quantify. Shifting food webs, loss of fishery productivity and lost economic opportunities are just some of the many impacts we are expecting to see because of increasing OAH. The proposed policy will help ensure a healthy Oregon marine ecosystem on which Oregon's fishing industry relies.

In summary, as a Co-Chair of Oregon's OAH Council I strongly support the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's newly drafted Climate and Ocean Change policy. The Climate and Ocean Policy will allow the State to continue to characterize OAH vulnerabilities and pursue science-based adaptation/resilience strategies for preserving Oregon's marine ecosystem and socio-economic assets. Through scientific understanding and awareness, we can work together to combat the threat of climate and ocean change to Oregon's marine ecosystem and coastal economies.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter of support and welcome any questions.

Sincerely,



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