



The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification 2017 Progress Report

Background:

In December 2016, the Pacific Coast Collaborative (PCC) launched the [International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification](#) (OA Alliance), bringing together governments and partners concerned about the impact of carbon on our oceans and ready to take meaningful actions to address these changes.

Over the past year, the OA Alliance has grown to 55 members, inviting membership from countries, states, provinces, counties, cities, Tribes and First Nations. The OA Alliance has also welcomed universities, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, businesses and other parties to join as affiliate members.

Working together, the international network of governments and organizations are:

- 1) supporting governments to take meaningful actions to address changing ocean conditions;
- 2) pushing for inclusion of strong ocean protection provisions in international climate agreements and other relevant frameworks; and
- 3) creating a coalition of governments and partners elevate the visibility and importance of ocean acidification in public discourse and policy development.

The acidity of the world's oceans has increased by 30 percent and is expected to double over pre-industrial levels by the end of this century. To protect our oceans, it is imperative that we significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions across the world. In 2015, 195 countries signed the historic Climate Agreement in Paris committing to meaningful and timely action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The world's nations and subnational governments must succeed in reducing emissions in order to protect the health of the oceans and other natural systems on which the planet depends. Mitigation and adaptation strategies designed to address ocean acidification must also be included in future international climate agreements in order to help communities around the world who depend on the ocean.

The OA Alliance is working to advance a coalition elevating the visibility and importance of ocean acidification in public discourse and policy development and pushing for inclusion of strong climate-related ocean protection provisions in international climate agreements.

We are grateful to our partners for providing crucial support for us to move from the project concept phase to implementation. Working to address the rapidly growing threat of ocean acidification to marine ecosystems and coastal communities and economies.

Progress Towards Achieving Alliance Goals and Outcomes:

Outcome One - Advancement of OA Action Plans:

The OA Alliance has engaged with current members in the development of jurisdictional OA Action Plans which will describe real, tangible actions that governments and affiliate members will take to respond to the threat of ocean acidification. The OA Alliance has made international commitments with the United Nations and the Our Ocean Conference to support the development of 15 OA Action Plans by June 2019.

The OA Alliance anticipates the development of draft, or near finalized, OA Action Plans by six members in the fall of 2018. We look forward to showcasing OA Action Plans as they are developed on a rolling basis in 2018 and 2019 to spur the creation of plans by our member governments and affiliate members.

The strength of the OA Alliance comes from members working together and committing to taking concrete action on ocean acidification from a local to international level. OA Action Plans support governments, organizations and decision makers in advancing actions to reduce the causes of changing ocean conditions (like reducing carbon emissions) and responding to the impacts of changing ocean conditions to coastal communities and marine ecosystems (like reducing other ecosystems stressors or developing adaptation strategies).

The OA Alliance created an OA Action Plan toolkit, a strategic process for getting started on the plan development. The OA Alliance team has hosted periodic webinars and other opportunities to help members in developing their OA Action Plan process. Notably, the OA Alliance hosted its first in-person meeting in conjunction with the Our Ocean Conference on October 6, 2017. The key takeaway from discussion amongst gathered members was the desire to see more products like the OA Action Plan toolkit which will help members with details and examples as they think through developing their plans.

Through continued webinars, one-on-one phone calls, ongoing product development (including sharing existing OA Action Plans and the creation of an OA Action Plan template) and meetings that offer technical information exchange, the OA Alliance will continue to support its members in the timely creation of OA Action plans. The OA Alliance will also assist members by sharing example legislation/ policies that have created OA task forces, commissioned reports, or established monitoring networks.

Outcome Two - Elevating Ocean Health and Acidification in Climate Agreements:

The OA Alliance has proactively worked with other international ocean initiatives, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals office, UNFCCC Secretariat and COP23 Presidency, national governments, and other OA Alliance members to elevate and advance the issue of ocean health and acidification within the UNFCCC process and other international frameworks.

This effort began when the OA Alliance was announced in September of 2016 at the Our Ocean Conference hosted by then Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington D.C. and continued at the World Ocean Summit in February 2017, the UN Conference to Implement SDG 14 in June 2017, the Our Ocean Conference in October 2017 and at COP23 in November 2017. The OA Alliance has actively coordinated with other international partners and initiatives to [help identify opportunities to advocate for inclusion of ocean protection](#) in the UNFCCC process, including through the development of "Nationally Developed Contributions" (NDC's).

Along with several other groups, including partners like the Ocean Climate Platform, Global Ocean Forum and Because the Ocean Declaration, the OA Alliance was invited to support Fiji COP23 Presidency's new Ocean Pathway Partnership Initiative which was announced at COP23 on November 16, 2017.

The Fijian government, working with the UNFCCC Secretariat, has indicated a strong desire to advance and build ocean issues and ocean risks into the UNFCCC process by 2019. The OA Alliance will work with Fiji and other members of the Ocean Pathway to provide a model for actions that governments can take to address the threat of ocean acidification and other climate-related changing ocean conditions on the ground, regionally, immediately. Desired outcomes include the addition of ocean health, ocean acidification and ocean resources within future international climate agreements, across the UN Climate Action Agenda and, where applicable, the addition of ocean health and ocean acidification within each party's Nationally Determined Contribution as required by the Paris Agreement at COP21.

Outcome Three - Building the Coalition:

The OA Alliance was first announced at the 2016 Our Ocean Conference and in December 2017 has just over a year later, has grown to 55 members, including 10 national governments, 5 states, 2 provinces, 4 tribal nations, and 3 cities, along with research institutions, businesses and NGOs. OA Alliance members are working together to develop practicable, implementable steps to mitigate causes, to adapt to unavoidable change and to build resiliency in marine ecosystems and the coastal communities impacted by changing ocean conditions.

Many governments around the world are gathering scientific information regarding ocean acidification and its impacts. While more remains to be understood and more investment in scientific inquiry is critical, it is becoming increasingly urgent to take actions to address and reduce the threat.

With so much at stake, the OA Alliance's cornerstone document, the Call to Action, provides an immediate opportunity for parties across the globe to highlight ocean acidification as an imminent threat to coastal economies and ocean ecosystems.

The Call to Action, which members agree to support when joining the OA Alliance, identifies five goals that – together – members will work to further:

- Advance scientific understanding of ocean acidification
- Take meaningful actions to reduce causes of acidification
- Protect the environment and coastal communities from impacts of a changing ocean
- Expand public awareness and understanding of acidification, and
- Build sustained support for addressing this global problem.

The OA Alliance is not alone in its efforts and has strategically identified and built relationships with strong partners and potential new members each month, ultimately securing more commitments to join.

In addition to securing new members, the OA Alliance has consistently engaged with and supported current members through newsletters, technical webinars and in-person meetings designed to assist with the creation of OA Action Plans and coordinate efforts at high-level international gatherings.

On October 6, 2017 the Government of Chile, in partnership with the states of Washington, Oregon and California, the Canadian Province of British Columbia, and Ocean Conservancy, hosted a first ever face-to-face meeting of OA Alliance members and interested partners at a breakfast in conjunction with the Our Ocean conference in Malta.

The breakfast meeting was attended by the governments of France, New Zealand, Iceland, Netherlands, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, the European Commission, Canada, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP) and other affiliate members and partners of the OA Alliance, including Ocean

Conservancy, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Ocean Foundation and the Ocean Climate Platform.

The meeting provided an extraordinary opportunity to discuss the OA Alliance and the development of OA Action Plans as tools for beginning or advancing regional implementation of efforts that address the causes and impacts of ocean acidification. This first meeting was attended primarily by the OA Alliance’s national government members given the international focus of the Our Ocean Conference. We look forward to future assemblies of our state, provincial, local and tribal government and affiliate members.

The OA Alliance is committed to increasing the number of government and affiliate members that are regularly engaged with OA Alliance efforts and to ensuring diversity of membership.

Major Milestones of the OA Alliance to Date:

OA Alliance Launch Event and OA Summit, December 2016. *San Diego, California*

Founding OA Alliance members Washington, Oregon, California and British Columbia hosted a launch event of the OA Alliance in California on December 13, 2016 which: 1) formally launched the OA Alliance with founding Alliance members and, 2) convened initial members at a high-level meeting to develop an OA Alliance Work Plan for 2017 leading to COP23.



Dec. 13, 2016. California Gov. Jerry Brown speaks at a news conference to launch a new organization aimed at protecting the oceans, called the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, at the Hotel del Coronado. (Gregory Bull). Via San Diego Union-Tribune

World Ocean Summit, February 22-24, 2017. *Bali, Indonesia*

In February 2017, the annual World Ocean Summit hosted by The Economist – for the first time ever – included several panels related to ocean and climate, in response to conversations initiated by the OA Alliance. Representing the OA Alliance, the Washington State Budget Director [spoke at the World Ocean Summit](#) to the critical need to address climate impacts and changing ocean conditions from a financial risk perspective. This is a powerful example of education and outreach across organizations that will be increasingly necessary in order to elevate and respond to the threat of ocean acidification.



February 24, 2017. Washington Governor Jay Inslee opens a panel "COP This- Ocean and Climate Change Policy" on the importance of reducing emissions and taking local steps to adapt to impacts of ocean acidification at the 4th annual World Ocean Summit hosted by The Economist.

The World Ocean Summit has traditionally focused on financing and investing in our ocean resources.

This year the World Ocean Summit agenda features an impressive suite of panels on climate impacts to the ocean, climate change risk and financing, and de-carbonization in shipping.

UN SDG 14, Ocean Meeting, June 5-9, 2017. *New York, New York*

On June 5-9, the OA Alliance, along with many of its members, participated in the United Nations conference to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The conference convened at UN Headquarters in New York, coinciding with World Oceans Day.

We were proud to have California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird [announce the OA Alliance voluntary commitment](#), as well as related ocean action commitments across the states of Washington, Oregon, and California, to assist in the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14.3 addressing ocean acidification and the threats it poses to their coastal resources.

The OA Alliance, along with members Chile, France, California, Washington, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Taylor Shellfish and Scripps Institute for Oceanography, hosted a side event on June 8, which included formal remarks from the following UN Members:

- Honorable Dr. Puakena Boreham, Minister of Natural Resources, Tuvalu
- Catherine Chabaud, delegate for Marine and Coastal Affairs at the French Ministry for Ecological Transition
- Ambassador Isauro Torres, Director for Environment and Oceanic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile

Bill Dewey from Taylor Shellfish discussed how the oyster industry had been impacted on the Pacific coast of the United States and steps they took to adapt by increasing their monitoring and research, treating hatchery waters for increased pH levels, breeding OA-resistant oysters and experimenting with different plants like seaweed and seagrass to help absorb carbon dioxide in the water column.

Julie Horowitz from Washington Governor Jay Inslee's office spoke about the ways Washington State has developed their own Ocean Acidification Action Plan, beginning with convening a Blue-Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification in 2012.



Left: Catherine Chabaud, delegate for Marine and Coastal Affairs at the French Ministry for Ecological Transition speaks at the OA Alliance SDG 14.3 side event. Right: OA Alliance SDG 14.3 side event, June 8th.

Jenn Phillips from California Ocean Protection Council presented the OA Alliance toolkit and encouraged the gathered governments, business, and organizations to begin taking actions now to protection vulnerable resources and communities now.

At a second event with our partners at The Ocean Climate Platform, Ken Alex, Senior Policy Advisor to California Governor Jerry Brown, spoke about the need to elevate ocean acidification and other climate-related changes to higher political levels across national and subnational governments, underscoring the importance of moving from research to immediate actions on the ground to adapt and build resiliency.

Our Ocean Conference, October 5-6, 2017. St Julian's, Malta

The OA Alliance was proud to participate in the 2017 Our Ocean Conference in Malta. Each year, government and affiliate participants of the conference deliver commitments in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, fostering a collaborative community working towards solutions to the greatest challenges facing the ocean.

As detailed earlier in this report, on October 6, the Government of Chile in partnership with Washington, Oregon and California, the Canadian Province of British Columbia, and Ocean Conservancy hosted a first ever face-to-face meeting of OA Alliance members and interested partners at a breakfast occurring in conjunction with Our Ocean conference.

The breakfast meeting was attended by the governments of France, New Zealand, Iceland, Netherlands, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, the European Commission, Canada, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP) and other affiliate members or partners of the OA Alliance including Ocean Conservancy, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Ocean Foundation and the Ocean Climate Platform.

The meeting provided an in-person opportunity to discuss the creation of OA Action Plans as tools for beginning or advancing regional implementation of efforts that address the causes and impacts of ocean acidification. This first meeting was attended primarily by the OA Alliance's national government members given the international focus of the Our Ocean Conference. The OA Alliance will be organizing future convenings with all of our government and affiliate members.



Above: Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture for Iceland announces their commitment to the OA Alliance. **Below Right:** The OA Alliance stands to announce its commitment to developing 15 OA Action Plans by June 2019. **Below Left:** OA Alliance member Bill Dewey (Taylor Shellfish) is featured along with the University of Washington Ocean Acidification Center for their work with Microsoft to launch the LiveOcean forecasting initiative.



UNFCCC COP23, November 6-18, 2017. *Bonn, Germany*

Participating at COP23 in Bonn, Germany was a significant milestone for the OA Alliance. It is clear that the OA Alliance is a much more recognized entity than it was at COP22. The OA Alliance was asked to participate in a number of events at COP23 and was recruited to join several other initiatives, including Fiji's Ocean Pathway Partnership. The Governors of California, Oregon, and Washington, our founding US states and the Environment Minister from British Columbia were all in attendance and contributed greatly to the focus on ocean impacts from climate change and on the OA Alliance.

OA Alliance representatives had speaking roles and participated in the following events:

- "Towards Ocean-related NDCs," Because the Ocean Workshop hosted by Chile, Fiji, Monaco, November 5
- Ocean & Climate Initiatives Alliance, November 9
- Ocean Climate Platform Side Event, November 10
- Ocean Pathway Partnership Event, November 10
- Oceans Day, Co-Organized by Global Ocean Forum, November 11
- Because the Ocean side event hosted by Chile, November 11
- [OA Alliance Side Event](#) featuring: Gov. Jay Inslee, Washington; Gov. Kate Brown, Oregon; Dr. Jan Newton, Washington Ocean Acidification Center, University of Washington; Chilean Minister; Fijian Minister; November 13
- Chilean "Because the Ocean" Working Dinner, November 13
- Ocean Pathway Partnership: Celebrating efforts of the ocean and climate platforms and keeping the momentum, November 16



COP23 | FIJI
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
BONN 2017



Above Left: The OA Alliance was proud to welcome new members to the OA Alliance during our side event including Fiji, Sweden, Iceland, New Zealand, Tokelau, SPREP, and Seychelles. **Above Right:** Tokelau announces joining the OA Alliance at the side event on November 13. **Left:** OA Alliance side event panel including Governor Jay Inslee (WA); Governor Kate Brown (OR); Dr. Jan Newton, Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network; Fiji Minister of Fisheries Semi Koroiavesau; Chile Minister of the Environment Marcelo Mena.

During COP23, the OA Alliance representatives forged a strong working partnership with Fiji. Fiji currently holds the COP Presidency and will retain that office for the next year. Fiji, and our other national members are leading on the inclusion of ocean in the UN FCCC and international climate conversations. The OA Alliance recognizes their important leadership and partnership in this arena.

Looking Ahead and Lessons Learned:

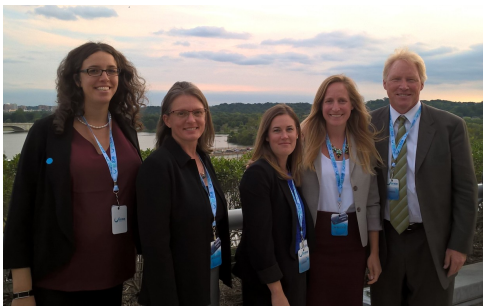
The success of the OA Alliance in just one year is brought about by the commitment of our members to take actions that address the growing impacts of climate related changes to our world's oceans and ocean resources. The leadership of the US and Canadian west coast states and province launching an International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, because of the early impacts in this region, has helped galvanize the need for actions at local and international scales. With increasing science and experiences of changing ocean conditions, it is clear there is a real need for knowledge and expertise on the substance and process for developing action plans to address the causes and to build resilience in the face of these changes. The OA Alliance will focus on our three key objectives in 2018:

- 1) Supporting governments to take meaningful actions to address changing ocean conditions;
- 2) Pushing for inclusion of strong ocean protection provisions in international climate agreements and other relevant frameworks; and
- 3) Creating a coalition of governments and partners elevate the visibility and importance of ocean acidification in public discourse and policy development.

Providing strong support on OA Action Plan development may require substantial technical and policy support to complete these steps. It is likely that additional capacity and partners will be needed to assist in this effort.

The OA Alliance is examining its structure and capacity to ensure it can support its members and best deliver on the call to action. It is likely that an updated governance structure will be presented in calendar year 2018, including the creation of a Steering Committee. It is critical that the OA Alliance be structured to optimize its impact and to better facilitate the development of OA Action Plans in 2018 and 2019. The OA Alliance will engage the membership in this planning.

We thank you for your commitment to this work and for your leadership on ocean and climate issues. Working together we can we can increase global attention on actions that address the causes of ocean acidification and changing ocean conditions, as well as reduce future impacts to our coastal communities, economies and the health of our oceans.



OA Alliance leadership team: Julie Horowitz, Office of Washington State Governor Jay Inslee; Dr. Caren Braby, Office of Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jessie Turner, OA Alliance Project Manager; Jenn Phillips, California Ocean Protection Council; Jay Manning, OA Alliance Advisor. Not Pictured: Elliott Bourgeault, British Columbia, Climate Action Secretariat.