



## The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification 2018 Progress Report

*[The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification](#) (OA Alliance) was established in direct response to the observed impacts of ocean acidification in the mid-2000's to oyster hatchery production across the North American West Coast. The intent of the OA Alliance is to motivate governments to proactively respond to the impacts of ocean acidification by charting a course of action for sustaining coastal communities and livelihoods.*

*Since its launch in December 2016, the OA Alliance has grown to over 70 members, including 11 national governments, 8 states, 2 provinces, 5 tribal nations, and 4 cities, along with research institutions, businesses and NGOs.*

*OA Alliance members are working together to elevate the issue of ocean acidification and develop OA Action Plans that contain 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.*

*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 make a living from the ocean.*



## Delivering on Project Goals and Objectives in 2018

### Goal One

#### **Supporting governments to take meaningful actions to address changing ocean conditions through the creation of OA Action Plans**

The OA Alliance held one-on-one calls in January 2018 with nearly every government member of the OA Alliance to seek feedback and better understand the concerns, interests, expertise, and needs of each member. Since then, the OA Alliance has engaged with 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 through Sustainable Development Goal 14.3 and at the 2017 Our Ocean Conference to support the development of 15 OA Action Plans by June 2019 and is well on pace to meet that goal.

The OA Alliance anticipates the development of finalized OA Action Plans by five members by the end of 2018. We look forward to showcasing OA Action Plans as they are developed on a rolling basis in 2019 to spur the creation of plans by our member governments and affiliate members, including a showcase at COP24 and COP25.

The OA Alliance created an OA Action Plan toolkit, a strategic process for initiating plan development. The OA Alliance team has hosted 12 webinars focusing on: the OA Action Plan Toolkit, member updates on the action planning process, a tutorial of the newly launched OA Information Exchange, techniques and pilots related to carbon sequestration through the use of submerged aquatic vegetation, background on existing OA monitoring networks and tools for beginning new monitoring sites, and other knowledge exchanges.

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 Alliance members who have showcased their work towards OA Action Planning through OA Alliance-hosted webinars include: France, Chile, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, Fiji, Secretariat for the Pacific Region Environmental Program (SPREP), State of Oregon, State of California, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), City of Vancouver BC, Casco Baykeepers in the State of Maine, the Hakai Institute, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, NOAA Ocean Acidification Program, the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON), Ocean Conservancy, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, IUCN, the Varda Group and the Ocean Foundation.

In May 2018 the OA Alliance had the opportunity to collaborate with graduate students at the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs (SMEA) at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. In consultation with scientific experts, OA Alliance staff developed a series of project prompts that addressed activities, knowledge gaps and best practices across various regions and levels of decision-making for the purpose of identifying and synthesizing knowledge that was most relevant to OA Alliance members. The university students responded to the prompts by developing tools and resources to assist members in the development of OA Action Plans.

Outcomes from the collaboration include:

- An analysis of regional approaches for forming an OA task force or commission across the U.S. states of Washington, Maine, Maryland and Oregon which will be compiled into a summary of best practices for initiating state-led actions on ocean acidification.
- Recommendations for city-led actions to combat ocean acidification based on existing strategies to address climate change and related impacts in the City of Vancouver, British Columbia; City of Seattle, Washington; and City of Portland, Oregon.
- Examples of best practices for using seagrass, kelp and mangroves as a tool to mitigate the impacts of

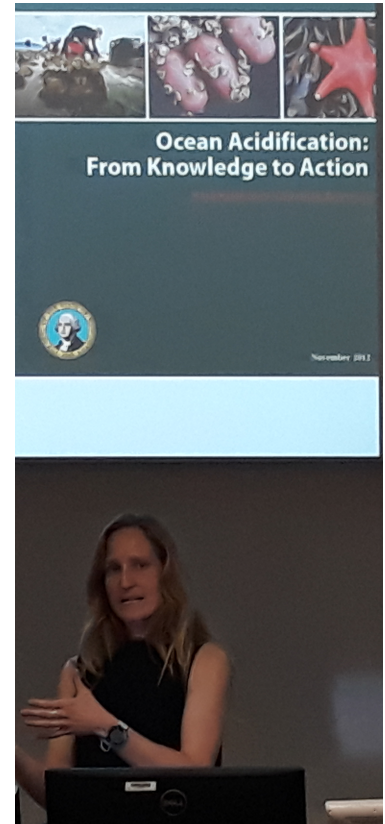
ocean acidification and provide fuller ecosystem and economic benefits.

- Recommendations for countries seeking to incorporate ocean acidification into Nationally Determined Commitments pursuant to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.
- Suggestions for ensuring robust stakeholder engagement in the development of OA Action Plans as responsive to the issues, opportunities, and influences of various regions.

Through continued webinars, one-on-one phone calls, ongoing product development (including sharing of finalized OA Action Plans) and meetings that offer the opportunity for technical information exchange, the OA Alliance will continue to support its members in the timely creation of OA Action plans.



**Above:** The Oregon State Coordinating Council on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia led by co-chairs Dr. Caren Braby and Dr. Jack Barth began meeting in January 2018. The Council produced the state's first ever draft Ocean Acidification Action Plan (OA Action Plan) in September 2018. The final OA Action Plan is expected to be released in 2019.



**Above:** Jenn Phillips representing California's Ocean Protection Council shares the state's experience creating a government led OA Action Plan at the New Zealand OA Community's annual workshop in February 2018.

## Goal Two

### **Advocating for inclusion of strong ocean protection provisions in international climate agreements and other relevant frameworks**

In 2017, the OA Alliance proactively worked with other international ocean initiatives like Because the Ocean and the Ocean Climate Platform, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals office, UNFCCC Secretariat and COP23 Presidency, national governments, and OA Alliance national government 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.

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 OA Alliance is working with Fiji, Chile 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 impacts, mitigation and adaptation measures 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.

In September of 2018 the OA Alliance was featured prominently throughout the Global Climate Action Summit. Convened by OA Alliance co-founder, the Governor of California Jerry Brown, the Summit provided a unique opportunity to showcase leadership on actions to address ocean acidification and to push for meaningful inclusion of ocean impacts and solutions within subnational and national climate action frameworks.

The OA Alliance was proud to contribute to the Summit's Ocean Climate Action Agenda which called on Summit delegates to:

- Protect and restore coastal wetlands;
- Establish and effectively manage marine protected areas;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ocean industries;
- Invest in nature-based climate resilience for coastal and island populations
- Sustainably manage ocean fishing and aquaculture;
- Include ocean-related climate measures in national goals under the Paris Agreement;
- Ensure finance and support for communities on the frontlines of climate change to best implement ocean-related measures; and
- Enhance global ocean and climate research and monitoring.

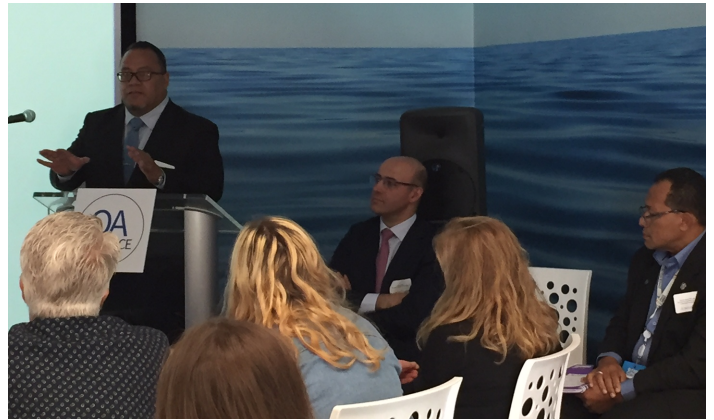
On September 13, the OA Alliance, in partnership with Ocean Conservancy, hosted a Summit affiliate event which was attended by more than 100 people and featured the following speakers:

- California Secretary for Natural Resources, John Laird
- Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Julio Cordano
- United Nations' Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson
- The Netherlands Minister of the Environment, Stientje van Veldhoven
- Hawaii Chairperson of Land and Natural Resources, Suzanne Case
- Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources, Matt Strickler
- Seattle City Council Member, Mike O'Brien
- CEO of Ocean Conservancy, Janis Searles Jones
- Senior Ocean Advisor to Washington Governor Jay Inslee, Jennifer Hennessey
- Special Representative for the Ocean Pathway, COP23 Presidency, Fiji, Taholo Kami
- Suquamish Tribal Chairman, Leonard Forsman
- Senior Climate Advisor to Oregon Governor Kate Brown, Dr. Kristen Sheeran
- Co-chair of Oregon Coordinating Council on OA and Hypoxia, Dr. Caren Braby
- California Ocean Protection Council Climate Change Policy, Jennifer Phillips
- Ocean Acidification Program Director, Ocean Conservancy, Dr. Sarah Cooley

The affiliate event was successful in its goals to: 1) showcase national and subnational commitments to addressing ocean acidification; 2) present approaches for responding to the science of ocean acidification through the creation of OA Action Plans; and 3) invite Global Climate Action Summit participants to make



commitments to address ocean acidification and other changing ocean conditions within climate agreement frameworks. The event culminated with new member announcements from the Netherlands, State of Hawaii, Commonwealth of Virginia and City of Seattle.



**Above:** New Members of the OA Alliance (Netherlands, State of Virginia, State of Hawaii and City of Seattle) are announced at the Global Climate Action Summit alongside UN Ocean Envoy, Ambassador Peter Thomson and Ocean Conservancy CEO, Janis Jones and Secretary of California Natural Resources, John Laird- both are co-founders of the OA Alliance. **Above right:** Special Representative for the Ocean Pathway, COP23 Presidency, Fiji, Taholo Kami, speaks about the Ocean Pathway’s road to COP25 “Blue COP” at the OA Alliance side event at the Global Climate Action Summit. **Right:** OA Alliance participates at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Our Ocean Conference held in Bali, Indonesia and updates a commitment to grow the Alliance and support the creation of 20 OA Action Plans in 2019.



In preparation for the 2018 Our Ocean Conference, the OA Alliance 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) which are due to be updated in 2020 pursuant to the Paris Climate Agreement.

Governor Jay Inslee of Washington State provided a video message registering an updated commitment to support the development of twenty OA Action Plans in 2019 and grow the OA Alliance to 100 members.

The OA Alliance hosted a formal side event at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP24 in Katowice, Poland on December 8, "Oceans Day" at the Pacific Pavilion and participated in a number of other side events including:

- Providing high-level remarks during the formal kick-off to "Oceans Day" at the Marrakech Partnership Ocean and Coastal Zones Action Event.
- Presenting on governments actions facilitated through the OA Alliance during the featured "Oceans Day" ocean acidification panel titled, "Actions on Ocean Acidification - the Other CO<sub>2</sub> Problem – towards realising sustainable development."

- Describing the role of sub-national and national leadership provided by OA Alliance members commitment to taking action at an event convened at the US Climate Action Center Pavilion co-hosted by affiliate members of the OA Alliance, Climate Advisors, Ocean Conservancy and Natural Resources Defense Council to effective initiatives working to advance ocean-based climate solutions.
- Showcasing the OA Alliance goals and objectives at the Indonesian Pavilion at an event coordinated by the Indonesian delegation titled, "Smart and Innovated Society Actions in Climate Change."

The OA Alliance side event, "From Knowledge to OA Action: Mobilizing Global Leadership to Advance OA Action Plans that Protect Coastal Communities and Livelihoods from a Changing Ocean" convened government and civil society leaders who are advancing tangible actions that protect coastal communities by addressing regional and local impacts of ocean acidification and:

- Described how taking national or regional actions on OA further supports ocean and climate commitments under existing frameworks like: UN SDG 14, UNFCCC/ NDC process, and the G7;
- Demonstrated how industry leaders are collaborating across sectors to motivate governments to action;
- Showcased completed national and state government OA Action Plans;
- Showcased regional collaboration on OA across governments and civil society; and
- Announced new members of the OA Alliance committed to addressing impacts of ocean acidification and other changing ocean conditions.



**Left:** OA Alliance side event "From Knowledge to Action" featured presentations and speakers from New Zealand, Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, The Nature Conservancy, State of California, Ocean Conservancy, and Fiji all working towards developing unique OA Action Plans. **Below:** Jennifer Hennessey represents Washington State Governor Jay Inslee and the OA Alliance during Indonesia's Ocean Day event.



Additionally, a number of OA Alliance members took part in events across the COP, describing their leadership role in advancing ocean and climate action and commitment to creating OA Action Plans. A few of them include:



State of Hawaii, SPREP, Ocean Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, State of Washington, State of California, Fiji, Chile, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand.

It was an honor to participate across a suite of ocean climate action events at COP24 and to be working in partnership with a dedicated community of national government, subnational government, NGO and civil society leaders.

Moving forward the OA Alliance is well aligned to meaningfully contribute to Ocean Pathway Partnership and other relevant ocean and climate efforts leading to the first "Blue COP25" hosted by OA Alliance member government, Chile in Santiago.



**Above:** OA Alliance member SPREP hosts a side event at COP24 “Living in the Face of Climate Change: From the Pacific Islands to the World.” **Below Left:** OA Alliance members Washington State and Sweden participate in an event “Ocean-Climate Action: A Step Forward in the Global Climate Effort” hosted by affiliate members Climate Advisors, Ocean Conservancy and NRDC. **Below Right:** OA Alliance member, State of Hawaii, describes work to mitigate carbon emissions and to advance a state OA Action Plan at an event co-hosted by the State of California and Fiji.



**Goal Three**  
**Building the Coalition and Expanding International Governance**

The OA Alliance was announced by five members at the 2016 Our Ocean Conference and in October 2018 has grown to more than 70 members including 11 national governments, 8 states, 2 provinces, 5 tribal nations, and 4 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.

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 commitments to collaborate across organizations and increasing commitments to join. 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.

The OA Alliance is also committed to expanding member representation through an updated governance structure by formalizing an OA Alliance Executive Committee made up of 12 government members that will:

- Review and approve the 2019-2020 draft work plan;
- Provide input on OA Alliance programming (webinars, trainings, meetings, tools and products) that advance the work plan;
- Set the long-term commitments of the OA Alliance and determine the appropriate longevity of the initiative to meet those goals;
- Set the direction for OA Alliance activities at high-level international ocean/ climate events such as COP25, United Nations SDG 14 Conferences, Our Ocean Conferences and others;
- Help identify funding sources, review potential grants or seek funding to secure needed resources;
- Engage in 4-6 annual teleconference meetings, provide input and vote on/make decisions on action items; and
- Serve as a member of the Executive Committee for a term of 12 months.

The newly established Executive Committee was announced in December 2018 and has scheduled its first convening for January 2019.

Beginning in January of 2019, the OA Alliance will receive facilitation and project management support from the following consultants under the newly formed consulting group, Cascadia Policy Solutions:

- Jessie Turner, Consultant, Cascadia Policy Solutions
- Jay Manning, Consultant, Cascadia Policy Solutions
- Meredith Marshburn, Project Associate, Cascadia Policy Solutions

This team of consultants will serve as the Secretariat of the OA Alliance and will be formalized as such under the new governance structure adopted by the Executive Committee in 2019. With expanded leadership and guidance from the Executive Committee, the Secretariat will implement the work plan of the OA Alliance.

In addition to setting the strategic direction of the OA Alliance, recruiting new members and supporting members in the development of OA Action Plans, the Secretariat will manage day-to-day operations of the OA Alliance which has included interactions with members, communications and newsletters, convening webinars, and planning participation at high-level events throughout the year. With guidance and assistance from the Executive Committee, the Secretariat will also be responsible for seeking grants and funding to support the implementation of the 2019 work plan, which may require commissioning and overseeing additional staffing or contracted support as determined by the Executive Committee and the OA Alliance work plan as the initiative grows and evolves.



## Major Milestones and Achievements in 2018

- New Zealand, California, Washington, Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Program and Ocean Conservancy have developed OA Action Plans and many more members have OA Action Planning underway.
- In 2018, the OA Alliance hosted eight webinars bringing diverse members together in dialogue to share updates on their progress towards developing OA Action Plans and share technical tools and approaches to implementation.
- In January, the OA Alliance held one-on-one check-in calls with each government member of the OA Alliance in order to better understand the specific concerns, interests, expertise and needs of each member.
- In February, the government of New Zealand invited OA Alliance membership from the State of California to attend their first ever nationally-convened OA Action Planning meeting.
- In April, the OA Alliance collaborated with graduate students at the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs (SMEA) at the University of Washington in Seattle to develop a series developing tools and resources to assist members in the development of OA Action Plans.
- In May, West Coast leadership of the OA Alliance convened an in-person meeting, with the support of a hired facilitator and strategic planner CONCUR Inc., to evaluate and identify long-term goals of the OA Alliance and recommend best approaches to governance, organizational structure, and capacity building that best support the strategic vision of the initiative.
- In September, the OA Alliance contributed to and was featured prominently at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, hosting an affiliate event attended by more than 100 people that: 1) showcased national and subnational commitments to addressing ocean acidification; 2) presented approaches for responding to the science of ocean acidification through the creation of OA Action Plans; and 3) invited Global Climate Action Summit participants to make commitments to address ocean acidification and other changing ocean conditions within climate agreement frameworks.
- The OA Alliance showcased its work through a poster session at a high-level science meeting hosted by UNESCO and the Ocean Climate Platform in Paris.
- In October, the OA Alliance attended the 2018 Our Ocean Conference and provided a video message from Governor Jay Inslee registering our updated commitment to support the development of twenty OA Action Plans in 2019 and grow the OA Alliance to 100 members; contributed to a meeting of national partners focused on incorporating ocean issues and ocean acidification into NDCs which are due to be updated in 2020 pursuant to the Paris Climate Agreement.
- In December, OA Alliance attended COP24 and hosted and participated in side events that showcased OA Action Plans.
- The OA Alliance co-authored a white paper on scalable actions that address ocean acidification to be submitted as part of the 2019 Ocean Observing Systems Conference.
- The OA Alliance produced eight e-newsletters to support year-round knowledge exchange among OA Alliance members and partners.
- The OA Alliance joined Twitter! @OA\_Alliance



**Left:** UN Ocean Envoy Ambassador Peter Thomson speaks during the ocean program of the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, California.  
**Above:** New members of the OA Alliance the Netherlands, State of Virginia, State of Hawaii and City of Seattle are announced during the Ocean Plenary of the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, California.

### Strategic Planning and Looking Ahead

In May of 2018, West Coast leadership of the OA Alliance convened an in-person to evaluate and identify long-term goals of the OA Alliance and recommend best approaches to governance, organizational structure, and capacity building that best support the strategic vision of the initiative over a two-year horizon (2018-2020).

The workplan for 2019 reflects and incorporates core outcomes from this process.

The organizational assessment meeting allowed OA Alliance leadership to proactively identify challenges and opportunities facing the OA Alliance over the next 2-5 years. The meeting allowed PCC OA workgroup members to identify the resources and additional capacity needed in order to achieve the desired level of impact over the next 2-5 years across the following priority areas:

- 1) Administering new governance and establishing formal secretariat model
- 2) Execution of OA Action Plans and deepening member engagement
- 3) Member recruitment
- 4) Coordinating participation at ocean and climate events
- 5) Communications and social media

In charting the strategic direction of the OA Alliance over the next several years many existing strengths and potential growth trajectories were identified, including:

- **Development OA Action plans and deepening member engagement:** There was strong agreement that the development of OA Action Plans is a unique and celebrated goal of the OA Alliance and that

expanding tools, resources, and information sharing opportunities for members will help us exceed our goal of developing 20 OA Action Plans by 2019, eventually engaging all government members in achieving meaningful Action Plans for their region. Continuing to deepen membership engagement within the OA Alliance is important to seeing real action on OA.

- **Elevating the issue of OA at the local, state, national and international level:** There was broad agreement that elevating the issue of ocean acidification at the local, state, national and international level is an important precursor to action on OA and that the OA Alliance has done a good job advancing this goal through partnerships with current members and by showing up at international ocean and climate events. Through partnerships and an insistence on collaboration, the OA Alliance is well poised to continue this leadership.
- **Acting as an OA information hub:** There was broad agreement that the OA Alliance has an important role to play in linking members with members and other experts and to provide access to toolkits, scientific information, education and outreach materials, and examples of OA action plan components. The more the OA Alliance can act as a hub, connector and elevate work among advanced and active members, the better it will be at expanding its own capacity and resources.

### **Lessons Learned & Adapting to Challenges**

The success of the OA Alliance in just two years is brought about by the commitment of members to take actions that address the growing impacts of climate-related changes to our world's oceans and ocean resources. The leadership demonstrated by the US and Canadian West Coast states and province has helped galvanize the need for actions at local and international scales.

With increasing science and experiential knowledge of changing ocean conditions, it is clear there is a real need for knowledge and expertise on the substance and process for developing local, regional and national OA Action Plans to address the causes and to build resilience in the face of these changes.

In February 2018, the government of New Zealand invited OA Alliance membership from the State of California to attend their first ever nationally-convened OA Action Planning meeting. The cross pollination between membership, in this example and many others, is a key feature of the OA Alliance and serves to strengthen key outcomes and enhance the commitment to engage in this work across a broad and diverse membership.

While growing the OA Alliance in diversity of membership, challenges do arise concerning the expertise, existing data and resources available to assist and support each new member in a unique and meaningful way.

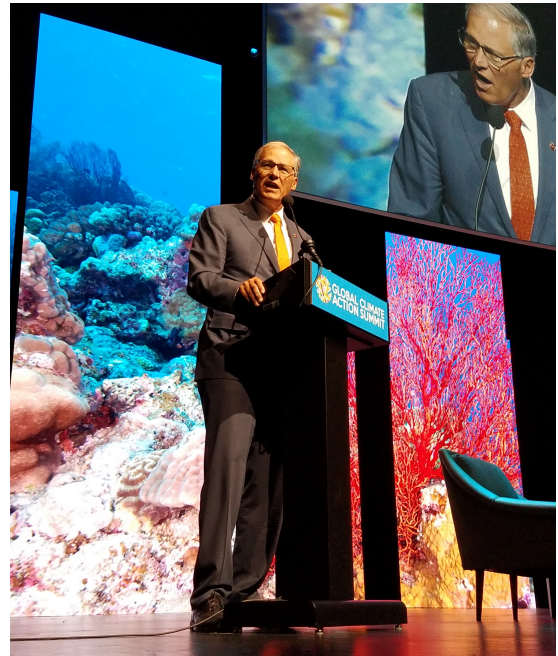
Core learning opportunities this year were found through the one-on-one calls with government members and through the West Coast leadership meeting to evaluate and identify long-term goals of the OA Alliance and recommend best approaches to governance, organizational structure, and capacity building that best support the strategic vision of the initiative.

Frequent and direct communication with members allowed the OA Alliance to better program the year in a way that supported and responded to members interests, expertise, concerns and in some cases, direct requests. Moving forward the OA Alliance will make one-on-one calls with members an annual occurrence.

## Thank You

We thank you for your commitment to this work and for your leadership on ocean and climate issues. With increasing science and experiences of changing ocean conditions, it is clear there is a real need for shared knowledge and expertise on the substance and process for developing local, regional and national OA Action Plans to address the causes and to build resilience in the face of these changes.

To quote the Nisqually Tribe, an early OA Alliance member, “The ocean is important to the community because water is life. It’s a part of our culture and a part of our life, since time immemorial.” Working together 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.



**Above:** OA Alliance co-founder, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee, speaks during the Ocean Plenary of the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, California.