



Toward a West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda

What is at Stake

According to a [report](#) from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in 2021, California's marine economy had a GDP of \$51.3 billion, with 511,324 employees and 26,054 businesses. A National Ocean Economics Program [report](#), which is now more than a decade old, found that California's 19 coastal counties generated \$662 billion in wages and \$1.7 trillion in GDP in 2012, which both account for 80 percent of their respective state totals. According to a [report](#) commissioned by the Oregon Legislature, Oregon's blue economy had an estimated GDP of \$3.1 billion in 2019. NOAA's [2024 Marine Economy Report for Oregon](#) noted the value of Oregon's marine economy increased by 54% during the past decade. Washington state is home to the fifth largest seaport in the United States and its maritime industry is [valued](#) at \$38 billion annually. In short, the West Coast's blue economy is immense and vital to the nation's prosperity.

Despite the West Coast's position as a blue economy juggernaut, the region faces a plethora of serious challenges that will need to be addressed during the coming decade. Failure to address these challenges threatens the quality of life of West Coast residents, the economies associated with the ocean and coast, and the fish and wildlife that rely on healthy ocean resources to thrive. Currently, California is moving forward rapidly with a plan to develop floating offshore wind energy resources that would come online by 2035, and Oregon and Washington are similarly exploring the potential of developing offshore wind energy in the very near future. As plans for alternative energy development to mitigate the advance of climate change progress, the West Coast is also engaged in climate adaptation planning to protect against frequent coastal flooding and sea-level rise. Embracing its roots in technology and innovation, the region is at the forefront of developing marine carbon dioxide removal strategies, scaling approaches to sustainable aquaculture, and addressing the impacts of climate change on its valuable commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries.

Science Informs Solutions

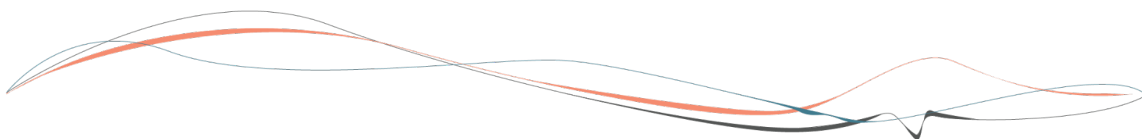
There is a consistent throughline connecting all of these issues—science. Independent, robust science sits at the center of the West Coast's blue economy and the climate-fueled challenges the region is facing. Science—a neutral arbiter of facts—can serve as a gathering point for decision makers to chart a course forward during the next 10 years to realize a vibrant vision for the future of the West Coast's ocean.

The Challenge: Developing a Unified Voice

It has become apparent that we need to speak with a single voice in support of science investment for our ocean. For too long, the West Coast ocean science community has been siloed and atomized. As a result, philanthropic funding and federal investments have been piecemeal, inconsistent, and insufficient. We must develop a strategic approach and employ proven tactics that can increase strategic investments by the philanthropic sector and the federal government in West Coast ocean science. We need a strong, unified voice that can nimbly navigate the political landscape and successfully articulate the case for the importance of ocean science on the West Coast.

The Solution: A West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda

A thorough, well-conceived science action agenda for the West Coast has thus far not been developed and shared with philanthropic funders or federal decision-makers. That's why [California Ocean Science Trust](#) (California OST) and [Oregon Ocean Science Trust](#) (Oregon OST) have partnered under a memorandum of





understanding (MOU) to speak with a unified voice and advocate for a *West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda*. The goal of the Action Agenda is to deliver expert-level ocean science to lawmakers on the West Coast and empower them to make informed decisions about the future of our ocean, our coastal communities, and our region's blue economy.

To create this forward-looking *Action Agenda*, we seek to bring together scientists, academic leaders, and legislators and their staff from across California, Oregon, and the broader West Coast who care deeply about supporting a healthy, resilient, and productive ocean through science-based management and policy. Through a series of high-level convenings, we will develop an action agenda that describes priority West Coast ocean and coastal science needs to increase funding and strategic investments in ocean and coastal science to our region.

We will develop outreach and other strategies to effectively position the *Action Agenda* as a priority for the philanthropic community, federal, and Congressional leaders. We seek to create a *West Coast Ocean Science Action Agenda* that unlocks funding to address the science priorities that will enable us to collectively tackle the biggest West Coast ocean issues while recognizing the importance of equitable access, meaningful engagement, and improved awareness. With much needed funding for our region, we will put science to work to accelerate progress toward a vision of a healthy, equitable, and productive ocean future for the West Coast.

About California Ocean Science Trust

California Ocean Science Trust (California OST) is a nimble nonprofit organization that serves a unique role in strengthening the application of cutting edge and policy-relevant science in ocean and coastal decision-making. Recognizing the deep expertise in California's universities, research institutions and scientific community, California OST was created by legislation nearly 25 years ago to serve as an independent and trusted voice, deliberately housed within an independent non-governmental organization. California OST delivers on this mandate by drawing resources to solutions-oriented science, supporting graduate education to foster the science-policy workforce of tomorrow, and delivering pragmatic, salient science advice to the state's policymakers, regulators, and managers. California OST's Executive Director serves as science advisor to the cabinet-level California Ocean Protection Council, which works to advance ocean and coastal policy across all state agencies and departments with ocean jurisdiction.

About Oregon Ocean Science Trust

The Oregon Ocean Science Trust (Oregon OST) secures and distributes funding to promote ocean and coastal knowledge, research, and monitoring to ensure the sustainable use of Oregon's resources, enhance coastal resilience, and support long-term ocean health for all Oregonians. Oregon OST promotes peer-reviewed competitive research and monitoring that leads to increased knowledge and understanding of Oregon's ocean and coastal resources; promotes innovative, collaborate, community-oriented, multi-institutional approaches to research and monitoring related to Oregon's ocean and coastal resources; enhances the state's capacity for peer-reviewed, scientific ocean and coastal research; and operates a competitive grant program to conduct research related to Oregon's ocean and coastal resources.

