

March 6, 2008

TO: Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council
FROM: Science and Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Marine Reserves Development Process

We are writing to express our concern about the pace of the OPAC marine reserves development process. The objective of having a set of preferred alternatives by November 2008 is creating an unreasonable timeline for a public process of this magnitude.

The STAC supports the OPAC in its efforts to develop a proposal for a system of marine reserves. However, we are concerned that the rate at which development is being pursued will prevent the proposal from being well informed by science. Experience in natural resource policy tells us that effective public policy implementation results from a development process that includes key elements:

- Measurable objectives
- Scientific information base
- Analysis of options
- Scientific review
- Public education
- Public involvement
- Transparency
- Predictability

These elements are deliberative and have associated time and budget requirements that may seem excessive in the short run. However, attempts to fast-track the process may lead to uninformed decisions and unintended consequences, leading to higher costs in the long run.

As OPAC's science advisory committee, the STAC considers it within our charge to advise OPAC of the importance of rationalizing the development process and ensuring that it is based on a solid science foundation. We are concerned that the pace of the process is precluding the incorporation of adequate scientific information and review, leaving open the potential for inadequately informed decisions and unintended consequences.

Experience with development and implementation of marine reserves in other areas provides guidance on the components and timelines of planning processes. The STAC stands ready to assist the OPAC in defining a process for Oregon that incorporates effective public involvement and allows adequate time for the development, analysis and review of scientific information.

Scientific and Technical Committee Members: Jack Barth, College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Science, Oregon State University; Susan Hanna, Agriculture and Resource Economics, Oregon State University; Selina Heppell, Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University; Richard Hildreth, School of Law, University of Oregon; Jay Rasmussen, Oregon Sea Grant, Oregon State University, chair; David Sampson, Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University; Craig Young, Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, University of Oregon