

**Dr. Liz Whiteman, California Ocean Science Trust**

**Testimony, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture, 21 March 2019**

- Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Liz Whiteman, I'm the Executive Director of the Ocean Science Trust, a unique non profit organization established by California statute and which serves Science Advisor to the Ocean Protection Council.
- We are a team of ten science-policy experts based jointly in Sacramento and Oakland. We believe that science can accelerate progress towards the state's vision for a healthy and productive ocean and coast; we are the only non-profit in California solely dedicated to that mission.
- **2016-17 Annual report to legislature.** We are required by our founding legislation CORSA (California Ocean Resources Stewardship Act, 2000) to report annually to the legislature. Today, I am pleased to present our 2016-17 report, partially fulfilling that requirement.
- I'd like to highlight two areas of work described in our annual report; sharing with you how progress during that reported year has had important subsequent impact and how we continue, with many partners and collaborators to make progress.
- **California's 4th Climate Assessment.** Last year, a working group of the OPC Science Advisory Team, led by Ocean Science Trust, produced the first ever oceans and coasts synthesis as part of California's 4th Climate Assessment, a powerful collaborative, cross-cutting effort to synthesize climate impacts across the state, required by Executive Order.
- This report represents a shift from projecting change and impacts to proactively exploring options to mitigate impacts and important to adapt. As a Science Advisory Team we can now look to lift and leverage our state's assets - including our statewide network of marine protected areas, seagrasses and kelp forest ecosystems, our ocean observation and monitoring assets, and the wealth of knowledge from California's academic institutions - to find the solutions that support ocean and coastal management goals in the face of ocean change.
- We are also positioned to support science discussions around balancing ecosystem protection with expansion into new ocean uses in support of a sustainable ocean economy and meeting the state's larger climate and clean energy goals.
- **Adapting to climate change in California fisheries.** Changes to ocean temperatures, chemistry and currents are already impacting fish stocks and fishing communities. Ocean Science Trust convened an OPC SAT expert working group to distill and disentangle the complexity of fishery impacts from climate change into four potential future scenarios. Supported by state funding, the working group provided pragmatic guidance to California Fish and Game Commission and California Department of Fish & Wildlife on a range of potential management responses to these scenarios that could help minimize social and economic impacts.

- Now, with additional philanthropic support, we are building on this foundational work by convening scientists, fishermen and managers to explore new tools and management processes being developed and tested nationally and internationally, and tailor actions that support sustainable fisheries in California.
- **OST 2020.** We take pride in - as a non-profit - nimble response to opportunities for science to have meaningful impact on policy dialogue, as a small team - in our ability to partner and tap into the best knowledge and expertise available, and in our ability to amplify return on state investments.
- I am pleased to share with you our updated strategic vision, oriented to the 20 year anniversary of our founding legislation in 2020. The bold experiment laid out in that legislation of a trusted non-profit partner to the state - is working as a model as an effective model for science-informed policy.
- We believe in putting science to work to create solutions to challenging problems. Thank you for your time today; we look forward to continuing to support your work.