Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Water Quality Protection Program Workshop
Moss Landing, California
October 23, 2009

The Honorable Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere & NOAA Administrator

As Delivered

- Thank you Bill for your introduction and thank you for the invitation to help close your workshop. I appreciate the opportunity to endorse the overarching importance of water quality and to praise all of you for your obvious commitment to connecting the health of the land to the health of the sea, and both to our own well-being.

- Monterey Bay and the sanctuary reflect and enable the ecological, economic and social well-being of its adjacent communities, and they provide unparalleled opportunities to visitors who come to enjoy their beauty and bounty. Your engagement and this workshop clearly recognize the importance of managing coastal and marine areas through an ecosystem perspective. Your work and NOAA's focus on ecosystem-based management are key to our ability to protect and restore coastal and ocean ecosystems and the communities, cultures and economies they support. Let's focus for a moment on this coast and this sanctuary.

- In order to better understand what is happening in the ocean, we need to know what is flowing off the land. With ten major coastal watersheds that drain approximately 7,500 mi.^{2} to the sanctuary coupled with an additional

18,500 mi.^{2} of watersheds that drain from San Francisco Bay, there is potential for significant impacts to sanctuary resources from water flowing from the land.

- I applaud your wisdom in bringing key partners together to establish the Water Quality Protection Program in 1994 with a dedicated focus on protecting and enhancing water quality in the Sanctuary and its watersheds.

- I understand that the Water Quality Protection Program has identified four areas of potential impact to the water quality in the sanctuary and has developed action plans to address and minimize those impacts. These plans, which address agriculture, urban runoff, marinas and boating, and microbial contamination, were crafted with the help of many of you. And you are key to implementation of the strategies and activities identified.

- I know that today's workshop focused on two of these – agriculture and urban runoff. I was very impressed to learn about many of your accomplishments. For example, on the Ag side:
    - 18 miles of dirt road has been treated to reduce erosion
    - 2,150 acres of farmland has been planted with cover crop
    - 34,715 acres of rangeland managed with improved grazing techniques
    - 2,440 ft of stream bank erosion problems stabilized

- Advances in addressing **urban runoff** are most impressive in the ways in which the community has been engaged and willing to change behaviors to help make a difference:
    - Local cities approved new ordinances to reduce pollutants in urban runoff, for example prohibiting pressure washing or commercial car washing runoff in storm drains
    - Over 200 citizens participated in volunteer water quality monitoring programs sanctuary wide.

- While these accomplishments are significant and do indeed contribute to addressing run-off and water quality issues, what else do we need to be doing and specifically, what can NOAA do to help?

I pose two for your consideration:

1. The need to better understand the impacts of runoff in the marine environment.
2. The challenges and impacts due to climate change and how this might couple with or exacerbate the impacts of runoff.

- NOAA can contribute as a partner in both of these. In relation to understanding the downstream and in-water impacts of runoff:
    - We can support additional targeted research and analysis
    - Our Integrated Ocean Observing System technologies and partnerships can serve to support your efforts, and
    - We understand and support the need for improved dissemination of data and online resources with real time information.

- And specific to climate, NOAA is a leading source of science-based climate services and is:
    - Researching, monitoring, modeling, assessing and communicating the impacts and expected effects of climate change. NOAA is committed to helping governments, businesses and communities understand and manage climate risks and adapt to changing conditions to reduce the threat of climate change.
    - Of specific interest for the Water Quality Protection Program, we provide drought and precipitation monitoring, which could provide useful advance warning for increasing monitoring efforts and be used as an educational tool to enhance partnerships among the agricultural community.

- As you consider your current action plans, strategies, and emerging issues, I encourage you to look more broadly across NOAA and the Water Quality Protection Program partnerships to identify the resources, expertise, and technical support that can be brought to bear to address your water quality issues.

- The Water Quality Protection Program relies on its partners to address the challenges of water quality. It's a huge challenge that we must all face together. You can count on NOAA as a committed, long-term partner.

Thank you.