

To the People of Puget Sound,

There's nowhere on earth quite like this special place we get to call home. Climb just a few hundred feet above saltwater and witness the two majestic mountain ranges bounding the Sound to the east and west; behold the string of volcanoes anchoring this enormous estuary to the north and south; be calmed by the abundance of lush green life everywhere in between. Ribbons of clear blue water flow throughout, draining the high country in summer and calling six species of salmon home from the ocean. Puget Sound sits – both literally and figuratively – at the center of it all, tying together the people and the place, its culture and its history that has imprinted on us all – our first people, the Tribes of the Salish Sea and those who continue to flock to this region.

Those of us who make our home in the Pacific Northwest also know that – despite our love, passion, and coordinated effort – things around us are changing. By some accounts, 97,000 new residents make their way to the Puget Sound region each year, drawn in many cases by the astounding beauty and easy access to the wild nearby.

We are at risk of loving this place to death. Despite sustained investments and the coordinated efforts of literally hundreds of partners, the cultural anchors of the Salish Sea Tribes are hugely at risk. Wild chinook populations continue to decline in most watersheds. Notwithstanding multiple new additions over the past year, the orca population status still lags behind a 2010 baseline of 86 whales. Oil, coal, and other concentrated sources of energy arrive and depart our shores via land and water, on an alarming and increasing number of vessels and trains, threatening our waters. Bulkheads arm the shorelines and a toxic mixture of chemicals from roadways is impacting the food web in ways that we're only just beginning to understand.

Add to these pressures the fact that the Puget Sound watershed is warming. Climate change forces us to imagine a fundamentally different and rapidly evolving landscape. Warming will alter the amount of snowpack and the rate of snow melt, changing the timing of peak stream flow. Last year, western Washington rivers dried up early, causing extensive impacts to salmon runs across the region that will likely be felt for many years. Alarming, this may well be the new normal. Corresponding changes to the fundamental chemistry of seawater are unfolding as well, threatening to disrupt the foundational marine web of life. We are challenged as a species to prepare for a future that we're unable to fully comprehend, but which will likely push the limits of our abilities to adapt.

As the scope and depth of our undertaking expands along with our understanding, federal and state funding is on the decline. We're increasingly forced into a position where we're not only competing amongst ourselves for a pool of funding wholly insufficient to accomplish what needs doing, but we are also feeling the impacts of cuts to programs supporting other societal priorities as well. If we continue at our historic pace of recovery, which is significantly underfunded, we cannot expect to achieve our 2020 recovery targets.

These are the threats that compel us to action, fueled by our devotion to place. We at the Puget Sound Partnership, along with our local, Tribal, and regional partners, have a vision of a resilient estuary that can help moderate the increasing pressures of a changing world. How we aim to accomplish our vision is found in this updated Action Agenda. For the next two years, this is the focused, measurable, and scientifically-grounded roadmap forming the core of the region's work between now and 2020

and beyond. Hundreds of Tribal, local, and regional partners and scientists contributed to its development, identifying the highest priority actions we need to take to reduce the impacts of polluted stormwater runoff, maintain and improve water quality to re-open shellfish beds, and protect and restore habitat crucial to the recovery of salmon and other species. We are exceptionally grateful for these partners who are the authors of this update – and who are also out there and implementing the large body of work it represents, day in and day out. Much of it is already underway, some of it has yet to begin, and virtually none of it is easy.

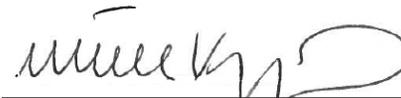
The 2016 Action Agenda reflects the considerable scale of our charge, and the urgency of making swift and sure progress to advance it. Partners taking many of the on-the-ground local actions that move us toward the recovery of Puget Sound have assumed a more central role in determining Action Agenda content this year, and nine local integrating organizations (LIOs) made up of Tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and others are developing nested recovery plans that articulate the highest priority strategies they can pursue locally to mend the Sound's health. At the same time, the 2016 Action Agenda is a leaner, more focused plan encapsulating the most important actions we must take in the next two years in order to stay on track. Finally, the actions have been through a rigorous technical review process, ensuring that our recovery plan is grounded in our best scientific understanding of what needs to be done. We won't finish by 2020, but we'll be underway.

This leaner, scientifically-grounded, strategic recovery plan is a call to action. We know that our restoration efforts are failing to compensate for the thousands of cuts we continue to inflict on the landscape as our population grows, and habitat gives way to more humans. We know that salmon, steelhead, and orcas – the

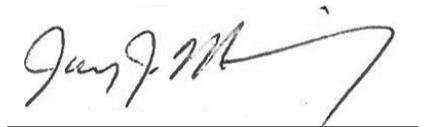
magnificent beings that in many ways define this corner of the world – are struggling to persist as we alter the land and waters to which they're adapted. And we know that warming temperatures and acidifying seawater are moving us toward a future that we don't fully understand, and are not entirely prepared for. Hard decisions are ahead, and we're past the point where additional delay is acceptable.

There's work to be done – let's roll up our sleeves, together, and get to it.

Sincerely,



Martha Kongsgaard
Chair



Jay Manning
Vice Chair



Russell Hepfer



Diana Gale



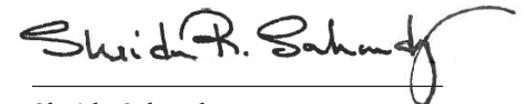
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