



PUGET SOUND ECOSYSTEM
MONITORING PROGRAM

Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program

July 7, 2014

TO: Sheida Sahandy, Executive Director, Puget Sound Partnership
Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council
Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Coordination Board
Puget Sound Partnership Science Panel

FROM: PSEMP Steering Committee

RE: Funding needs for monitoring the health of Puget Sound

As state agencies (and others) develop budgets and funding strategies for 2015 and beyond, we would like to alert you to a number of critical, unfunded monitoring gaps identified by the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP). These gaps are the culmination of a process we started in 2012 which has involved PSEMP's technical work groups and more than 200 subject experts, regional monitoring program leaders, scientists and data users across Puget Sound. In order to identify the most important gaps in regional monitoring efforts, we first inventoried all current, on-going monitoring programs in Puget Sound, and then evaluated where key gaps exist in our ability to track the condition and changes over time of the Puget Sound ecosystem.

In February 2014, PSEMP's technical work groups presented a final list of 58 priority monitoring gaps to the Steering Committee and a number of invited policy leaders and executive managers. This list spans a wide range of key ecosystem components, processes, and attributes directly related to managing the recovery and restoration of Puget Sound. These priority gaps can be further categorized as:

- (1) Monitoring that directly supports the Puget Sound Partnership's Vital Sign indicators;
- (2) Monitoring that supports the Puget Sound Partnership's three strategic initiatives (habitat, shellfish and stormwater); and
- (3) Monitoring related to other scientific priorities (e.g., ocean acidification).

The attached report summarizes these high-priority monitoring gaps. Because individual gaps can be related to different management priorities and ecosystem concerns, we believe all priorities merit consideration, especially as different gaps and priorities may be opportunistically matched to appropriate fund sources.

At this time, we are asking for your help to support and communicate these regional monitoring priorities. Your help is needed to identify and secure funding, especially as the state develops and adopts a budget for the coming biennium. In particular, we would like to point out two existing monitoring programs which may be at risk of losing their funding: the *Toxics in Fish Program* (Washington Department of Wildlife) and the *Beach Program* (jointly managed by the Department of Ecology and the Department of Health). These two core Vital Sign monitoring programs may require

support in FY 15-17 to assure continued reporting of the metrics and indicators adopted by the Leadership Council.

In addition, we look forward to working with you to build a longer-term funding strategy that addresses these monitoring priorities as well as opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of our recovery and restoration efforts and investments.

Thank you for considering this important need in our overall efforts to recover the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem. Please do not hesitate to contact us or PSEMP staff if you have any questions or comments.



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