

OSU marine biologist to serve in Obama administration

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Dr. Jane Lubchenco will Serve as Undersecretary of Commerce, Administrator of NOAA

CORVALLIS, Ore. —“ The Oregon State University community was pleased to learn that one of its own, renowned marine biologist Jane Lubchenco, an OSU faculty member for more than three decades, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as undersecretary of Commerce in the Obama administration.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco

In that role, Lubchenco will also act as administrator of NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Her nomination has been hailed nationally by the scientific community as a sign of how seriously the new president takes the role of science in determining administration policy on a range of important issues, including climate change, ocean health and conservation issues.

OSU officials who have seen Lubchenco’s scientific leadership first-hand were quick to applaud the Senate’s unanimous consent vote to confirm.

—“Dr. Lubchenco’s outstanding service to the science of marine biology and to the public through her communication of that science has provided invaluable benefit to both,” said OSU President Ed Ray. —“Thanks to her research and scholarship, we know more about sensitive coastal marine areas, impacts of humans on our environment, the importance of biodiversity, climate change and more. Her 32 years as a member of our faculty have been among the most productive I have ever seen.

—“We have every reason to expect that she’ll continue that record of leadership at NOAA, and commend President Obama for nominating and the Senate for confirming an administrator who will be guided by the very best science concerning oceans and the atmosphere.”

Former OSU President John V. Byrne, who led NOAA himself 25 years ago as a member of the Reagan administration, was equally enthusiastic.

“Jane’s knowledge and wisdom concerning the environment and her experience with major national and international scientific groups will serve her well as she moves the president’s, and her, agenda forward to benefit the environment and consequently all people living on this planet,” said President Emeritus Byrne. “She will face political, scientific and budgetary challenges, but I am convinced she will handle them well. The United States will benefit from having Jane Lubchenco as administrator of NOAA.”

Lubchenco, the Wayne and Gladys Valley Professor of Marine Biology, earned her Ph.D. in ecology from Harvard University in 1975 and taught there before joining the OSU faculty in 1977. OSU is home to one of the largest and most respected group of marine scientists in the United States, a distinction that she helped to build over the next 30 years. Among her accomplishments during her tenure at OSU:

• She served as president of the International Council for Science, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Ecological Society of America. She was also a presidential appointee to two terms on the National Science Board, which advises the president and Congress and oversees the National Science Foundation. • She founded the widely respected Aldo Leopold Leadership Program, which trains outstanding academic environmental scientists to be effective leaders and communicators of scientific information to the public, policy makers, the media and the private sector. • With her husband, OSU Distinguished Professor of Marine Biology Bruce Menge, she led creation of the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) in 1999 with a major grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to investigate the near-shore marine ecosystems of the West Coast of the United States. That work has significantly enhanced understanding of those areas and uncovered such dynamics as the recurring hypoxic or “dead zones” along the Oregon and southern Washington coasts. • Her work as a scientist has made her one of the most highly cited ecologists in the world “ a distinction underscored by her election to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the Royal Society and the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World.

Among her numerous awards and recognitions are a MacArthur Fellowship (more commonly known as a “genius grant”), the \$300,000 Zayed Prize for the Environment, eight honorary degrees and the title of “Distinguished Professor of Zoology.”

During her tenure in Washington, D.C., Lubchenco will retain her position on the OSU faculty. Menge also remains on the OSU faculty and leads the PISCO initiative.

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