

25 March 2019

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Honorable Betsy Johnson, Co-Co-Chair  
Honorable Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Co-Chair  
Honorable Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Ways and Means Committee and Interested Parties

I write this letter of strong support for the Department of State Lands funding of the South Slough NERR via budget bill (HB 5035). I am a resident of Coos Bay and a retired fisheries scientist. I serve as the Vice President of the Friends of South Slough, a non-profit citizens group that works to support activities at South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and helps with grant support of various programs.

I have been engaged with several projects and interactions with the staff at South Slough NERR. Among those I am especially impressed with their leadership demonstrated in the collaborative project Partnership for Coastal Watersheds (PCW). <https://www.partnershipforcoastalwatersheds.org/>. This highly collaborative effort among public-and private-sector citizens in the Coos Bay community has a goal of developing locally-driven approaches to responsible development and assist preparation for climate-related changes on Oregon's south coast. Without the leadership from the staff at South Slough, and the federal state partnerships, funding for this collaborative project would not have been possible. The result of the effort is an impressive, digitally accessible information data base that can be used for science-based management.

An important spinoff from this PCW effort is the proposal in this funding package submitted for your considerations that increases the South Slough's GIS expertise and engagement, through their GIS Position package, *Package 108*. Funding for this position will provide important mapping and geographic data expertise through establishing a permanent GIS position at the South Slough reserve. Having permanent on-staff geographic information system capabilities will support scientific research, effective management of diverse lands and infrastructure, and public enjoyment and exploration at South Slough Reserve.

In addition to their leadership is providing summaries of important data from the past and current conditions, the staff at South Slough reserve works to translate science to citizens. They hold workshops that range from highly technical training opportunities to engagement with toddler education. The Seasonal Education Position package, *Package 110*, restores educational programs for schools and children at South Slough Reserve by establishing a permanent part-time seasonal education position to allow a professional educator to join the Reserve staff during peak months each year.

This outreach and scientific arm at South Slough Reserve is not only a valuable asset to the Oregon DSL and Oregon communities, this pioneer *First Reserve* serves as a model for other reserves in the nation. The models of federal and local partnerships have now become a foundation for achieving effective management and leverage a larger value than could be achieved by individual efforts.

I urge your continued support of all their programs.

Sincerely,



Christine M. Moffitt, PhD  
Vice President, Friends of South Slough