



April 19, 2019

Subcommittee on Education, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Lew Fredrick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ladies and gentlemen of the Subcommittee on Education, Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Hugh Link, and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission – the commodity commission that represents the largest single-species fishery in the state of Oregon, with over 400 permitted fishing vessels comprising the fleet. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony on the importance of HB 5024.

I would like to encourage the funding, and stress the importance, of the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program within HB5024 for the 2019-2021 biennium. Our fishery faces numerous challenges each season, ranging from market forces to weather. The seemingly ever-changing health of our ocean is one of the most troubling challenges, however, because there is so much about it that is still a mystery.

Our fishermen have not liked having to deal with our various dilapidated jetties, which make bar crossings more hazardous, but have been able to learn from experience to try and make the crossing a little safer for vessel and crew.


The same cannot be said about the increase in the instances of hypoxia, ocean acidification, and elevated levels of domoic acid in areas that see large algae blooms from warmer ocean conditions. Now, we have also been facing a growing issue, that hit California hardest, that has to do with increased entangling of whales. Another area where the science may indicate a relation to warmer, changing ocean conditions, but where more study is desperately needed to help find a solution that allows for our fishing industry and the whales to continue to coexist.

This not only funds that kind of critical research and study, but it also helps train the next generation of minds that will be battling these issues for decades to come. As a bonus, it also provides sea-going experience and “hands on” training for high school teachers who can then pass this on to their students, creating interest in the field and in careers within the fishery (important, as worker shortages are another challenge we face).

There has been an Oregon Dungeness Crab fishery for over a century on our coastline. Now, we are facing a whole new growing wave of challenges. Without programs like these, and the scientific foresight they can provide, it is hard to envision that we can continue to navigate these challenges blindly and be able to last too far into another century.

Again, I would like to highly encourage you to fund the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program within HB5024 for the 2019-2021 biennium.

Sincerely,



Hugh Link,

Executive Director

Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission