



February 3, 2021

Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Recovery
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 126: Change of boundaries in state statute.

Dear Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery:

The Friends of South Slough Reserve, Inc.(FOSS) is pleased to provide strong support Senate Bill 126, which provides the necessary statutory changes to allow the expansion of the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve's administrative boundary to include lands that are already owned and managed located north of Valino Island. This action will open up additional federal funding opportunities for the Reserve to support the responsible stewardship of its full management area.

The South Slough Reserve was designated in 1974 as the first unit of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). The Reserve contains diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats that support important natural resources including salmon, herons, bald eagles, migrating waterfowl, elk, river otters, beavers, oysters and crabs.

FOSS is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to protecting the functions, values and processes of estuaries, and enhancing the work of the Reserve. The Reserve programs of research, education and public service are valuable assets to the region and to the nation as a whole. Our FOSS organization actively collaborates with Reserve staff to support education programs, including the Summer Science Camp, K-12 school programs, and community education programs that provide the public with the opportunities to hike and paddle local trails while learning about the plants and animals that depend on estuarine habitats. In addition, FOSS also provides administrative support for grant-funded research, including current projects to better understand the distribution of lamprey along the Oregon Coast and an assessment of the best techniques for restoring eelgrass, a critical estuarine habitat for finfish and shellfish. FOSS provides financial support for internships to give students and recent graduates valuable work experiences in the fields of science education and natural resources management.

Over the past decade, the Department of State Lands has acquired over 1,500 acres connected to the South Slough estuary that are currently managed by the Reserve.

Senate Bill 126 would open additional and important federal funding opportunities for the Reserve to support the responsible management of lands it already owns and enhance existing programs it provides the public. We encourage the Committee to pass SB 126 and support the South Slough Reserve in its important work.

Sincerely,



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South Slough Reserve Management Commission