

Friends of South Slough Reserve, Inc.

P. O. Box 5446, Charleston, Oregon 97420



15 March 2021

Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Kathleen Taylor, Representative Jeff Reardon and Interested Parties:

We write this letter of strong support for Senate Bill 5539 that provides operational support for the Department of State Lands Budget, including operations of South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve). We represent the Friends of South Slough Reserve, Inc. (FOSS), a nonprofit corporation dedicated to protecting the functions, values and processes of estuaries, and enhancing the work of the Reserve.

The Reserve was founded as the nation's first National Estuarine Research Reserve and has remained a leader in research and educational activities that benefit Oregon, the nation, and beyond. The federal-state partnership of this institution provides a synergy of energy and knowledge to advance important science regarding estuarine environments. The coastal education and training opportunities provided by the Reserve are infused with support from many partners. The Reserve teams work with multiple natural and cultural resource partners including: sovereign tribes; natural and cultural resource agencies and organizations; national and regional coastal management organizations; aquaculture, fisheries, wetlands and forestry professionals; educators and students at all levels; and regional economic development organizations. Researchers are co-located at Oregon Institute of Marine Biology thus making for easy interactions with shared space and student interns.

We were grateful for support in the last biennium for funding increases that advanced the Reserve's GIS expertise and engagement, and their capacity for providing educational programs. The Reserve now has permanent staff expertise and a GIS system to support for research, effective management of the diverse lands and infrastructure and provide information to increase public exploration of the Reserve lands. The additional educational support increased the capacity of the Reserve to respond to regional needs for educational programs. With COVID restrictions, the staff were better able to provide a rapid transition to successful virtual program offerings.

South Slough Reserve contributes directly to all the Governor's 2021-23 priority areas, most specifically those of "Responsible Environmental Stewardship" and "Seamless System of Education." In addition, the role of the Reserve in education and science-based understanding of estuary environments contributes to the health and safety of the community, with responsible science and educational outcomes that support for a thriving economy.

We urge your continued support of all their programs.

Sincerely,

Christine M. Moffitt, PhD
President, FOSS

Todd D. Buchholz
Vice President, FOSS

A non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational and interpretive services for, and enhancing the development of, the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

[www. https://fossnerr.org](https://fossnerr.org)

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