



February 8, 2020

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife Recovery
900 Court Street NE
Room 347
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 126 Allowing Department of State Lands to Expand Estuarine Research Reserve Management Area to Include Other Lands Acquired by Department Connected to Coos Bay Estuary

Chair Golden,

The Oregon International Port of Coos Bay (Port) respectfully requests your consideration in review of the proposed SB 126, which would allow the Department of State Lands (DSL) to expand the boundaries of the estuarine reserve management area of the South Slough Reserve to include additional property that has been acquired by DSL. The Port is working closely with both the South Slough Reserve and DSL to gain a full understanding of the implications and potential unintended consequences of expanding the boundary.

The Port owns and operates the Charleston Marina Complex. Charleston is home to the third largest commercial fishing fleet in the state of Oregon. The footprint includes seafood processors, a significant recreational fishing and boating community, and an industrial shipyard that provides services including but not limited to repair, maintenance, and construction of maritime vessels.

While the Port does not oppose the research and preservation efforts accomplished by the Reserve, we have reservations regarding expansion of the existing boundary. As a Port Authority, we conduct Agency permitted efforts on a routine basis. This includes in-water work for dock and facility construction and maintenance, as well as dredging. These activities already present a lengthy and onerous process, which is frequently further complicated by the Port's proximity to the South Slough Reserve. While the Port does not blanketly oppose the intentions of the boundary expansion of the South Slough Reserve, there are concerns that this expansion will extend property under reserve control far closer to Port owned property and further complicate or curtail permitting endeavors.

The Port has made known our concerns to both the Reserve and the Department of State Lands. While we applaud the Reserve's staff taking time last week to conduct listening sessions, we are concerned that we are not being afforded sufficient time to conduct our due diligence to explore the real and perceived consequences which could result from this action.

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The Port is committed to continuing discussions with the South Slough Reserve and the Department of State Lands as SB 126 moves forward. We also maintain steadfast reservations regarding potential unintended consequences for both the Port and business interests currently operating in the Charleston Marina should this bill be placed into statute. We request the opportunity of additional time to further analyze potential future issues. The Port is in communication with DSL to propose language in SB126 which will alleviate our concerns and provide the assurances we seek through legislation.

Sincerely,



John Burns, CEO
Oregon International Port of Coos Bay