



Re: Letter of Support for HB 2903

To House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association would like to voice our support for HB 2903.

Over the past 10 years, OCVA has watched Oregon implement the state's marine reserve program with a keen interest. The state has managed to designate and implement 5 marine reserves and protected areas up and down the coast which was no easy task. We have been impressed with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and all the great work done to gather good baseline data and 10 years of ecological and socio-economic data. We understand there's much more to be done and that this is just the beginning. After 10 years of effort, we are still in support and looking forward to gathering more information in the coming years as not every reserve was established at the same time and ocean conservation measures can take many years to see the changes that will inevitably come to pass.

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association is the recognized Destination Management Organization for the entire coast and we have a great stake in the preservation of the coast and the coastal economies reliant on the ecological integrity of our state waters. We will continue to support the marine reserve teams that are doing great citizen science, outreach and interpretation programs, and acting as the conduits for local fishers and volunteers to work with the state and their partners.

We fully support the bill and the recommendations in the recent 10-year assessment. We believe the marine reserves program will continue to help the state in its understanding of our critical nearshore ocean ecosystem with adaptive management. We also continue to support the state in using local fishing businesses in contracting, when possible, to do many of the different science projects that are used to gather data.

Sincerely,

*OREGON COAST VISITORS ASSOCIATION*

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