



Dear Representative Pham and Dembrow, members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources (as well as all member on the Joint Committee on Ways and Means),

On behalf of the 22 undersigned concerned scientists, ocean users, community leaders and conservationists in Oregon, we write to ask you to better protect Oregon’s amazing nearshore ecosystems by supporting full allocation of ODFW’s Marine Reserve Program budget and supporting additional investments in the program by passing [House Bill 2903](#). Oregonians from all walks of life and all areas of the state, along with the fishing community and other ocean users, worked hard to establish these areas and it's critical that we follow through with more investments to improve the Reserves for our coastal communities.

Just over a decade ago, Oregonians recognized the importance of their ocean and the value of protecting it when they created the state’s [Marine Reserve Program](#). Today the reserves and protected areas around Otter Rock, Redfish Rocks, Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, and Cape Perpetua encompass roughly 9% of the state’s waters.

These protected zones are underwater wonderlands. [Rocky reefs](#) serve as ideal habitat for a variety of rockfish species, vast [sandy bottoms](#) support large populations of sand dollars and Dungeness crab and towering [kelp forests](#) give abalone, crab and other creatures a place to call home. All of this, and more, exists as a part of Oregon's Marine Reserves and nearshore ecosystems.

The Marine Reserve Program was [established](#) to conserve marine habitats, promote biodiversity, and to provide areas where scientific research and monitoring can be conducted and comparison studies can be done. The reserves have successfully achieved, and even surpassed these goals.

In the past decade alone, scientists have published 18 research publications and 85 reports on topics like hypoxia, ocean acidification, changing ocean environments, and ocean acidification. The Program has also allowed scientists to test out new scientific methods for nearshore monitoring at a number of reserves, hosted over 75 community engagement events, and worked with over 10,000 volunteers from the local community. It's clear that Oregonians care about this Program and protecting these amazing ocean ecosystems.

To continue this work, we must retain the full allocation of ODFW's Marine Reserve Program budget. In addition, passing House Bill 2903 would give an additional \$800,000, for the next biennium, to the reserves and allow the team of incredible scientists and resource managers more opportunity to better understand and manage our coastline with increasing climate impacts, ever-changing ocean conditions, and to collect data to keep our fisheries thriving. It would also establish an adaptive management plan, so that informed changes can be implemented swiftly and efficiently, as needed.

We can, and we must, build on the success of the Program so that we, as Oregonians, can continue to protect, monitor, and appreciate these amazing nearshore ecosystems in which seals, crab, anemones, rockfish, and a vast array of other marine plants and animals can thrive.

Sincerely,

Dave Lacey, Owner/Manager
South Coast Tours

Katie Voelke, Executive Director
North Coast Land Conservancy

Charlie Plybon, Oregon Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Phillip Johnson, Conservation Director
Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition

Dr. Catherine de Rivera, Professor
Portland State University

Joe Liebezeit, Interim Statewide Conservation Director
Paul Engelmeyer, Tenmile Creek Sanctuary Manager
Portland Audubon

Steve Griffiths, Conservation Chair
Audubon Society of Lincoln City

Ann Vileisis, President
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

Dr. Francis Chan, Associate Professor
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Ben Enticknap, Pacific Campaign Manager & Senior Scientist
Oceana

Katy Bear Nalven, Program Manager
Cape Perpetua Collaborative

Gregory Niles, Owner
All Depth Charters

Nadia Gardner
North Oregon Coast Resident & Scientist

Victoria McOmie
Roads End Neighborhood Group

Taylor Brooks, Marine Program Coordinator
Friends of Otter Rock

Christine DeMoll
Former Business Owner, Cape Perpetua

Drew Roslund, Owner
Overleaf Lodge and Spa

Michael Gaskill, Communications Director
Coast Range Association

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director/CEO
Oregon Coast Visitors Association

Lisa Kerr
Cannon Beach Resident

Jena Carter, Oregon Marine and Coast Director
The Nature Conservancy

Dan Twitchell, Co-Director
Cascade Head Biosphere Collaborative