



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of State Lands

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State Land Board

To: House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Representative Dacia Grayber, Chair
Representative Rick Lewis, Vice Chair
Representative Thuy Tran, Vice Chair

Tina Kotek
Governor

Shemia Fagan
Secretary of State

From: Bill Ryan, Deputy Director, Oregon Department of State Lands

Tobias Read
State Treasurer

Re: Testimony on House Bill 2914-2

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, my name is Bill Ryan, and I am the Deputy Director of the Oregon Department of State Lands. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today in support of House Bill 2914-2, which will help Oregon address the alarming ongoing impacts of abandoned and derelict vessels on our public waterways and our public schools.

DSL is the administrative agency of the State Land Board, which oversees the lands granted to Oregon at statehood “for use of schools” and the Common School Fund. DSL manages those school lands to contribute revenue to the Fund, which sends millions of dollars to our public schools every year – \$72.2 million in 2023.

On behalf of the State Land Board, the Department also manages Oregon’s public waterways to ensure use for recreation, navigation, fishing, commerce and more.

Abandoned and derelict vessels, or ADVs, seriously affect the health and safety of our public waterways by creating both environmental and navigational hazards. These vessels also seriously affect the Common School Fund, which since 2017 has expended more than \$18 million removing ADVs from public waterways.

Addressing impacts of ADVs on our waterways and schools became a priority for Director Walker when she came on board to lead DSL in 2018. Many voices are now raised in concern, including those of the public, legislators, local and federal governments, ports, marinas, other state agencies – and our State Land Board.

The 2023-25 Governor’s Budget includes \$18.76 million to remove ADVs accumulated in public waterways. Removing those vessels will address immediate risks, but removal must be paired with long-term solutions for ADVs – specifically, creation of a statewide abandoned and derelict vessel program.

Governor Kotek and Treasurer Read, in their individual roles as members of the State Land Board, have called on the Department to take immediate action by convening a workgroup to collaboratively develop an ADV program framework that includes elements of prevention, response, enforcement, and outreach and education, as well as identifying potential funding sources. The Land Board will formally consider directing the Department to convene this workgroup, which would include stakeholders of broad and diverse perspectives as well as state agencies, during its April 11 meeting. The workgroup would form as quickly as possible, with the aim of presenting a final report with recommendations by April 2024.

House Bill 2914-2 establishes a state ADV program within the Department and an ADV Fund in the State Treasury. With this bill, the State Land Board and the Department will be able to quickly act on the recommendations of the ADV workgroup and bring forward an Oregon ADV program for the Legislature's consideration in the 2025 session. We greatly appreciate Representative Gomberg recognizing the impacts of ADVs on coastal communities, and really all Oregon communities, and building a bridge to connect the very important current and future pieces of an ADV solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.