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Ways and Means Co-chairs and Committee Members:

My name is Tracy Crews and I am reaching out to thank you for your continued support of Oregon State University and Oregon Sea Grant and to testify specifically about the impact of the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program. For the last 15 years I have managed the Marine Education program for Oregon Sea Grant at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center. As I hope you all know, the Hatfield Marine Science Center is a special place, teeming with energy, full of innovative ideas, and it is an inspiration to those of us who are lucky enough to work here, as well as the thousands of visitors who engage in our programs. In my position with Oregon Sea Grant, it is my privilege to work with hundreds of researchers and graduate students, bringing science to life for youth and other visitors, while helping researchers share their work and career pathways with teachers and k-12 students from across the state.

I grew up in the middle of Texas in a tiny town called Jollyville, and although I always loved science, it wasn't until my junior year of high school that I had a transformative experience that put me on the path to where I am today. My Biology teacher took a small group of us to the University of Texas's Marine Science Institute and we spent the day on a research vessel trawling for fish and conducting box cores to sample benthic organisms. I was completely captivated and immediately started researching college programs that would allow me to pursue my dream of becoming a marine biologist. But as is the case for many university students, it wasn't until graduate school many years later that I would have the opportunity to engage in at-sea research.

So when I initially saw the call for proposals for ship time through the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program in 2015, the wheels in my head started to turn. I was reminded of how impactful the shipboard experience in high school was to influencing my post-secondary education pathway, and how I held on to that experience as I struggled through the most challenging of college classes. Having personally experienced the value and impact of such an experience, I really wanted to find a way to offer similar opportunities to Oregon students, particularly high school and community college students in coastal communities. I approached a few new researchers about the idea of creating a program that would bring together high school teachers, and high school and community college students, to work with researchers and

their graduate students as part of their science party on research cruises and found they were as excited as I was about the idea.

Since then, my colleagues and I have submitted three successful proposals to the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program and have been awarded a total of 10 days on the *R/V Oceanus* for three multi-day research cruises that took place in the fall of 2016, 2018, and 2019. During these cruises, participating teachers and students were trained on how to rig, deploy, and retrieve a variety of oceanographic equipment, how to sort samples and collect data. Participating researchers and graduate students developed skills around mentoring and communicating science, and research conducted during these cruises led to the completion of several Master's and Doctoral degrees. In addition, blogs were produced by all participating teachers and students, a variety of educational resources were created, and post-cruise public and school tours were led by teachers and students, increasing the impact of these research cruises. Data collected during these cruises helped address previous data gaps and was subsequently used to identify future research needs and inform management decisions.

Teachers and students who participated in these research cruises have come from communities across Oregon including Warrenton, Lincoln City, Toledo, Newport, Waldport, North Bend, Bandon and the Portland Metro area. These research cruises have been transformational for many participants, leading to increased confidence and inspiration for dozens of teachers and students, and changing the education and career trajectory for many. Furthermore, these experiences been leveraged by students to obtain internships, scholarships, to get into graduate school and obtain other research-related positions. This would not have been possible without funding from the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program.

Here at OSU, we are very much looking forward to the arrival of our new research vessel, the *R/V Taani*, and hope we are able to continue to provide these at-sea research opportunities to students, teachers and researchers through your continued support of the Oceangoing Research Vessel Program. As the cost to operate the new vessel is expected to be significantly more than previous OSU vessels, we hope you will consider increasing the amount of support that you provide to this very important and impactful program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracy Crews