

Submitter: Kirsten Grorud-Colvert
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Hello, my name is Kirsten Grorud-Colvert. I'm an Associate Professor at Oregon State University.

For nearly 25 years, I've been studying marine reserves and other marine protected areas around the world, including in Oregon, with a global network of scientists and researchers. A year and a half ago we published a summary paper in Science, one of the leading scientific journals. We reviewed decades of data to better understand what is needed for marine reserves to be successful, for nature conservation, for biodiversity, and also for people and communities.

What we clearly saw is that one of the key predictors of marine reserve success is community engagement. So when I heard that the position for community outreach and engagement at the ODFW Marine Reserves Program was cut, I knew I had the responsibility to share this important finding of our research.

The science is clear that if we want long term resilience and productivity for our coasts, community engagement is key. This science supports reinstating this Community Engagement Project Leader position.

When we think about the Oregon Marine Reserves goal and responsibility to no adverse impacts to communities, that is directly linked to having transparency, dialogue, listening, and learning that an outreach and engagement position provides.

After 10 years, the marine reserves in Oregon are providing important long-term information and insights into climate resilience, what it means to be impacted and to adapt, for example to recent ocean events like the marine heat wave we had.

We are beginning to understand this because the Marine Reserves Program is one of the only groups looking at coastal resilience by collecting both ecological data and human dimensions data on the coast, both directly and with scientists like myself. This would be further supported by HB 2903.

As an example of the crucial link the Community Engagement Project Leader provides, I have a longstanding collaboration with them on rockfish recruitment.

ODFW takes that information, and the outreach and engagement coordinator shares it with the communities and stays connected with them and their voices.

Again, The science is clear that community engagement is key. This science supports reinstating the funding for Community Engagement Project Leader at the ODFW Marine Reserves Program. Thank you.