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

Testimony in support of HB 4132: Relating to Marine Reserves

Submitted by Dick Vander Schaaf, Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director

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Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

As Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Oregon, I am pleased to write in support of HB 4132. TNC is a science-based, non-partisan organization, with over 80,000 supporters in Oregon alone, committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends.

In Oregon, TNC has been involved with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) marine reserves program since its earliest beginnings. The program consists of five marine reserves, each named for local natural landmarks - Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, Otter Rock, Cape Perpetua, and Redfish Rocks - and is the state's only long-term nearshore marine monitoring program.

Since its inception, TNC has been a key partner in helping to stand up the marine reserve program. Examples of our efforts including installing educational signage, supporting community teams, and conducting research in the reserves, including collecting data on sea star wasting disease and taking ocean acidification measurements in partnership with Oregon State University and local communities.

Today, we are asking for your support for HB 4132, which builds upon the recommendations of a 10-year review conducted by Oregon State University based on the best available science. This bill calls upon ODFW to develop an adaptive management plan for Oregon's five marine reserves, assess the capacity of these reserves to enhance ecological resilience to environmental disturbances, create measurable metrics and indicators, and enhance outreach and engagement activities. HB 4132 also directs ODFW to work with communities, including commercial and recreational fishing fleets, to ensure the science derived from the marine reserves is useful and incorporates local knowledge.

HB 4132 is critical to the future success of the marine reserve program, ensuring that the investments and scientific knowledge gained from these marine reserves is used to improve ocean management and continue to educate and inspire Oregonians and our coastal visitors.

We thank Chair Helm and the members of this committee for your leadership and steadfast dedication to this critical issue and urge you to move this bill forward this session.