

Dear legislators,

On behalf of the 28 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 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Marine Reserve Program budget and supporting additional investments in the program by passing House Bill 4132. 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 over 45 research publications and reports on topics like hypoxia, ocean acidification, changing ocean environments, and ocean acidification. The Program has also allowed scientists to test new scientific methods for nearshore monitoring at a number of reserves, hosted community engagement events, and benefited from over 25,000 hours of volunteer participation. 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 4132 would give an additional estimated \$1,200,000 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.

This request is based on the 10-year decadal review completed by Oregon State University in 2022 which provided recommendations to the legislature to improve the program and truly make it one of the best in the world. Importantly, HB 4132 requires the Program to outline defined goals for engagement and outreach to tribes, and will be implemented going forward.

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,

Ian Giancarlo, Oceans Advocate, Environment Oregon

Charlie Plybon, Oregon Policy Manager, Surfrider Foundation

Joe Liebezeit, Assistant Conservation Director, Bird Alliance of Oregon (f.k.a Portland Audubon)

Ben Enticknap, Pacific Campaign Manager & Senior Scientist, Oceana

Julia Degraw, Coalition Director, Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Julia Degraw, Coalition Director, Oregon Conservation Network

Annie Merrill, Ocean and Estuaries Manager, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition

Michael Gaskill, Communications and Organizing Director, Coast Range Association

Dick Vander Schaaf, Associate Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy of Oregon

Cameron La Follette, Executive Director, Oregon Coast Alliance

Mary Kyle McCurdy, Deputy Director, 1000 Friends of Oregon

Cherice Bock, Climate Policy Manager, 350PDX

Rebecca Gladstone, Co-President, League of Women Voters of Oregon

Ellen Porter, Conservation Chair, Umpqua Valley Audubon Society

Katy Bear Nalven, Program Manager, Cape Perpetua Collaborative

David, Harrison, Conservation Chair, Salem Audubon Society

Katie Voelke, Executive Director, North Coast Land Conservancy

Debbie Schlenoff, Conservation Chair, Lane County Audubon Society

Linda Craig, Member of Steering Committee, MCAT (Mobilizing Climate Action Together)

Erin Ulrich, President, Rogue Valley Audubon Society

Kelli Ennis, Director, Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP)

Ann Vileisis, President, Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

Taylor Brooks, Marine Program Coordinator, Friends of Otter Rock

Dave Lacey, Owner/Manager, South Coast Tours

Tom Calvanese, Manager, Oregon State University Port Orford Field Station

Addie Cooper, State Board Chair, OSPIRG Students

Jennifer Fairbrother, Legislative & Policy Director, Native Fish Society

Caroline Rice, Outreach & Program Coordinator, Redfish Rocks Community Team