

Submitter: Taylor Brooks

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB4132

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

On behalf of the Friends of Otter Rock Marine Reserve, we urge you to support HB 4132 and invest in our Marine Reserve Program through the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The mission of our community team is the protection and preservation of rocky shore intertidal life, nesting and migrating sea birds, and marine mammals that inhabit the Otter Rock Marine Reserve and adjacent conservation areas. Through outreach programs, we work to strengthen stewardship and raise awareness of biodiversity of the Marine Reserve.

Oregon Marine Reserves serve as invaluable “living laboratories”, on which we will depend to gather critical information about our ocean’s changing environmental conditions. In addition to serving as effective tools for ecosystem research and public engagement and education, our Marine Reserves also provide the benefit of increasing fishing opportunities. Research has shown that no-take regulations within marine reserves consistently result in increases in the population of species, the number of different species present, and individual size of fish. These research areas will only become more valuable over time as tools for adaptive management in our coastal ecosystems.

However, the program will suffer without critical funding that was cut from ODFW. We are fully supportive of a robust Marine Reserve Network and monitoring program as a result of the recommendations from the 10-year review of Oregon Marine Reserves. Our communities greatly benefit from the partnership of the ODFW Marine Reserves team. It is essential for ODFW funds to support community engagement positions within the Marine Reserve program to continue to foster working relationships amongst stakeholders. Oregonians and all ocean-users benefit from collaboration between our management organizations and local communities. These positions are also critical for ensuring that diverse voices get to be a part of the coastal conservation conversations. We urge you to fund their program to continue this unique near shore monitoring opportunity. By supporting HB 4132, we can continue to work together to ensure coastal resiliency and ocean protections.

Sincerely,

Taylor Brooks, Marine Program Coordinator