

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 921-1. My name is Courteney Halstead, and I am the Economic Development Technician for the South Coast Development Council (a 501(c)3) dedicated to economic development from Florence to the California border). I'm here to highlight how restoring the marine ways in Charleston is a strategic and necessary investment in Oregon's economic resilience.

Oregon's coastal economy is anchored to a thriving maritime sector—commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and recreational craft that support seafood, tourism, and other industries such as wood products. Charleston is the third-largest fishing hub in Oregon, and in 2020 alone, it landed approximately 16.8 million tons of commercially caught seafood, valued at nearly \$20 million.

Despite this, ship repair capabilities on the South Coast have steadily declined, forcing vessels to seek repairs elsewhere, taking millions of dollars in economic activity with them. SB 921-1 reverses this trend, ensuring that the shipyard recaptures this market, keeping money circulating in our coastal communities rather than flowing out of the area.

Investing in Charleston's shipyard aligns directly with regional and federal economic development strategies including:

- The 2024-2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties prioritizes economic diversification and infrastructure investment—both of which this bill supports by revitalizing a critical maritime service.
- The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians CEDS emphasizes strengthening local industry and increasing economic self-sufficiency—goals that restoring ship repair capabilities directly advances.
- The USDA Rural Development Strategic Plan highlights the importance of investing in essential infrastructure to promote long-term economic sustainability in rural areas—a core outcome of SB 921-1.

Beyond growth, this investment fortifies resiliency. When emergency repairs are needed—whether due to a storm, an accident, or normal wear and tear—having a fully functioning shipyard in Charleston will prevent costly delays for the fishing fleet and the industries that depend on it. With the closure of nearby facilities, this need is urgent. Oregon's maritime economy is too important to be left without the infrastructure it requires to thrive. SB 921-1 ensures that our coastal communities have the tools to sustain themselves, adapt to challenges, and remain economically strong for years to come. We urge your strong support for this bill. Thank you.