

Submitter: Theodore DeWitt

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3786

I am writing in support of HB 3786, aka Oregon's "Blue Economy Bill". Funding provided through this bill will support obtaining new knowledge and data about Oregon's coastal ocean. That information is critically needed to sustain our fisheries and tourism industries, and economies along the coast and across the state. Communities across the state are connected economically and socially to the Oregon coast by way of access to fresh seafood, opportunities for seaside recreation, production of our iconic salmon, and the import and export of our state's goods via coastal ports and waterways. House Bill 3786 will support scientific research on topics critical to sustaining these goods and services, such as better knowledge about the habitats and vulnerabilities of coastal fish and crabs so that we may better manage those resources, understanding why our kelp forests are in decline so that they might be rejuvenated and thereby support coastal species such as sea otters, and understanding how changes to ocean conditions will affect rocky shore, sandy beach, and estuarine organisms sought after by residents and tourists for viewing or harvest. Having resided and worked on the Oregon coast for 40 years, I enjoy our great seafood and viewing marine life, such as birds and tidepool invertebrates, and I am aware of declines in the quality and diversity of our coastal ecosystems. As an ecological scientist, I appreciate how intricately connected coastal species and their ecosystems are to ocean conditions and to human activities. I also deeply appreciate the efforts made by the state agencies to reverse these declines, and I know that despite years of study and monitoring, there is much that we don't know about these systems. Truthfully, HB 3786 will not be able to fully support the scientific effort needed to answer these questions, but it will support the steady acquisition of new knowledge and data needed Oregon's resource agencies, coastal communities, and ocean-dependent businesses to better manage these critical living resources.