



Co-Chairs Rep Helm and Rep Owens, Vice-Chair Rep Finger McDonald, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

On behalf of the Oregon Ocean Alliance, whose collective membership of nine organizations represents thousands of Oregonians, we ask you to please support HB 3786 - "Blue Economy" Bill. This bill would provide \$3 million for critical research in Oregon's coastal areas and Territorial Sea to increase our understanding of changing ocean conditions and increasing stressors in our coastal and marine environment. This work is vital to informing best management strategies, mitigating impacts, and supporting our ocean economy for generations to come.

Oregon's ocean, public beaches and estuaries are a beloved part of the state's identity and a key economic driver for coastal communities. The ocean plays a critical role modulating the climate. However, changing ocean conditions are having profound effects on species abundance, distribution, and biodiversity. Meanwhile, sea-level rise and increased storms are rapidly changing the shoreline. All of this affects the well-being of all Oregonians across the state, who deeply value the coast.

State decision makers need good science and data to inform the management and use of ocean, beach, estuary, and coastal transportation resources. A few timely examples:

- Coastal storm surge, erosion, and sea level rise threaten highways and critical infrastructure, putting communities and visitors at risk.
- Commercial and recreational fisheries in Oregon are impacted by ocean acidification and hypoxia, kelp decline, and changing distribution of species. These impacts need to be better understood so agencies (like ODFW) can take appropriate action.
- Further understanding the ocean, beach, and estuarine ecosystems collective contribution to blue carbon storage is a timely and relevant topic for state decision makers, and can help the state meet its carbon reduction goals.

Furthermore, state agencies managing our coastal resources largely rely on federal funding to do so. With recent budget and staff cuts at the federal level, it is more important now than ever to invest in our state agencies. The Oregon Ocean Science Trust is one funding pathway that agencies can leverage to advance actionable research that informs management decisions.

The Oregon Ocean Science Trust is well equipped to move forward on these research initiatives efficiently and has demonstrated accountability and success in directing state funds to the highest and best use for science and research. We encourage you to support HB 3786.

Thank you,

Joe Liebezeit
Co-Chair
Oregon Ocean Alliance

Annie Merrill
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