

Submitter: Will White

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3786

I urge the Committee to support HB 3786. I am a marine fisheries ecologist who studies Oregon's coastal environment and how we manage it. I have published over 100 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals and in 2022 I led the legislatively-mandated university assessment of Oregon's Marine Reserves program; recommendations from that assessment were incorporated in HB 4132, passed in 2024.

With that perspective, I know that Oregon's valuable coastal ecosystems and economies face multiple threats from global climate change, including ocean acidification, sea level rise and erosion, and more unprecedented events like the 2014-2016 marine heatwave that decimated our state's kelp forests. The research that the Oregon Ocean Science Trust funds is fundamental to understanding those threats and how best to respond to them. That research is essential and timely, because the negative effects of climate change are already changing coastal ecosystems today. Moreover, the need for the state to fund this research on our coast is particularly keen in 2025, as the federal agencies and funding opportunities that address these threats are being gutted.

Oregon has the opportunity to continue to be a global leader in research to understand the effects of climate change on our oceans and coasts and how best to respond to those threats. Continued funding for Oregon Ocean Science Trust through this bill will help our state meet those challenges.