



Oregon Legislature  
Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Senator Fred Girod and Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chairs

May 9, 2025

Dear Senator Girod and Representative Nosse:

I am the Interim Director of the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB) located in Charleston, Oregon. OIMB is the marine laboratory of the University of Oregon. I am a marine biologist and principal investigator of the Coastal Trophic Ecology Lab. I write today to ask you to support our \$110,000 capital project titled “Dive Boat Program Improvements”. This project is critical to better understanding Oregon’s near shore marine environment while giving our students improved access to a key skillset they will capitalize on as they advance into careers.

I have been with OIMB for ten years. As soon as I started here, I immediately identified that our Institute needed better research SCUBA diving capacities. In 2017 I began to search for the necessary funding to modernize our dive research program. I was finally successful in gaining a \$200,000 award from the National Science Foundation grant for a new dive boat in 2024.

The \$110,000 request from the Legislature would cover remaining expenses associated with making our boat fleet improvements so that we can support our newest vessels and growing research programs. Like our newest boat, the RV Megalopa, the new dive boat is being built locally, in this case at North River in Roseburg Oregon. The funding would further add a dive platform onto the stern of the RV Megalopa and allow the Institute to expand our dock to accommodate the new dive boat. Each of these projects will involve local contractors.

An area where diving capacity will immediately be deployed is the regular monitoring of kelp forest health along the southern Oregon Coast. Kelp forests are the foundation that supports a wide variety of marine life, including many commercially and recreationally important fisheries and marine mammals, which benefit our local economy. These forests are currently experiencing alarming declines as a result of complex results of increased marine heatwaves. We can only understand these changes and what we can do about them by using SCUBA diving and having boats that can take our students and researchers into the coastal areas where these forests grow.

Please include this funding in Oregon’s capital budget bill, SB 5531, which will help us leverage federal funds and increase Oregon’s capacity for SCUBA diving research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Aaron Galloway'.

Aaron Galloway, PhD  
Associate Professor, Interim Director  
Oregon Institute of Marine Biology  
Department of Biology  
University of Oregon  
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