

Testimony of Gil Sylvia on SB 737
Oregon Ocean Science Trust

My name is Gil Sylvia and I am the Director of the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station (COMES), an interdisciplinary marine research organization located in Newport and Astoria, Oregon and part of the Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station. I am a research scientist with twenty three years of experience working on Oregon-related marine science and management issues. I was a member of the Nearshore Research Task Force established by the Oregon legislature in 2009 (HB 3106). I would like to express support for SB 737.

One of the recommendations of the Nearshore Research Task Force (NRTF) was to establish an Ocean Science Trust. The concept of a Trust was based on the recognition that although Oregon marine resources generate almost a billion dollars in annual state income and supports 40,000 jobs, Oregon is chronically under-investing in nearshore research and management and lacking fundamental knowledge on species, habitats, and users. There is limited understanding of Oregon's resource values, tradeoffs, and cumulative impacts from allocating and managing marine resources and ocean space.

Consistent with this need and the recommendations of the NRTF, SB 737 establishes an Ocean Science Trust that can help fund and support the research needed to improve the science and management of Oregon's ocean resources. The Trust provides a sound, transparent, and efficient mechanism to utilize private and public funds, both national and state, to address key research needs for managing Oregon's marine resources.

The Trust is based on five sound and fundamental concepts: 1) a professional board with experience in competitive grants, marine science, foundations, and/or fiscal assurance; 2) a grants program that is open and competitive; 3) a process that will enhance the state's ability to support high quality peer-reviewed science; 4) support for research that is innovative, collaborative, community-oriented, and multi-institutional; and 5) a transparent process based on Oregon's public meetings and record laws.

Oregon faces significant challenges in understanding and managing the nearshore due to growing demand by diverse user groups, chronic underinvestment in research and management, and mounting legal and regulatory requirements. An Ocean Science Trust will help leverage support for the innovative and collaborative research required to bring value to the state of Oregon from improved use and conservation of Oregon's marine resources.