

March 25, 2013

Representative Jules Bailey, Chair
House Energy and Environment Committee
State Capitol
Salem, OR



*Stimulating economic growth
in the greater
Yaquina Bay region*

RE: HB 3451: Establishes Oceangoing Research Vessel Program

Dear Chairman Bailey,

The Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation encourages passage of HB 3451 that provides \$330,000 in state funding for a comprehensive ocean research vessel program. This funding would support research conducted from research vessels by Oregon University System students and faculty as well as state of Oregon employees. The information gathered will help local communities and the state to develop effective marine and coastal policies related to fisheries, offshore energy, tourism and conservation.

Oregon is the only state bordering the territorial sea that does not provide state support for federally financed ocean research vessels that operate out of its ports. Lack of state support puts these vessels at risk because their research days are limited. If operating funds become restricted, these vessels are more likely to be dry-docked – resulting in significant losses to local economies.

We are delighted that the National Science Foundation recently awarded Oregon State University a \$3 million grant to design a new ocean research vessel. We anticipate that the new vessel, once constructed, would replace the *R/V Oceanus*, currently operating out of Newport. The *Oceanus* annually expends approximately \$3.6 million in the local area for fuel, crew support and other operations. We risk losing the *Oceanus* and its successor if other states provide greater assurances of active deployment due to the support they commit to vessel operations. This would be a big loss for the economy of the central Oregon coast.

The Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation (YBEF) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(6) corporation formed in 1981 to encourage and promote growth and economic development in the greater Yaquina Bay region. Its members represent a dynamic cross-section of public and private sector business and community leaders from throughout the Newport and Toledo area, including cities, ports, schools, marine science, health care, the arts, and the business sector.

The Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation recognizes the value of ocean research, both economically to our local community and scientifically to the entire state. We support passage of HB 3451 as a demonstration of the state's commitment to Oregon's role in marine research, and as a means to ensure that Oregon scientists can continue to conduct needed research within Oregon's coastal waters and beyond.

Sincerely,

John Lavrakas, President
Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation