



March 28th, 2013

SB 737-2 Establishing Oregon Ocean Science Trust

Chair Roblan, Members of the Senate Rural Communities and Economic Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony in support of SB 737 with the dash 2 amendments, the bill to establish an Oregon Ocean Science Trust as recommended by Oregon's Nearshore Research Task Force. As the representative of "non-consumptive recreational ocean users" who served on the Task Force, I am personally happy to see the attention given to the recommendations by the Oregon State Legislature in the form of this bill as well as the opportunity to show my support on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation and our Oregon membership.

The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots coastal conservation organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves, and beaches for all people. Our Oregon membership of over 600 recreational ocean users is represented by our Coos Bay, Newport, Portland and Siuslaw Chapters. Their programmatic work includes frequent coastal cleanups, water quality monitoring, participation in stakeholder processes regarding wave energy and marine reserve establishment, and education and outreach to local schools and community groups on ocean literacy topics. This bill is a significant step in the right direction towards better understanding the many challenges we are facing as a coastal state and the responsibility that we hold in ensuring a healthy ocean for future generations and being better prepared for the challenges that are ahead of us. Oregon faces significant challenges in the future for maintaining our beach water quality monitoring program, tsunami and marine debris prevention and removal, monitoring for marine invasive species, ocean acidification, seafloor mapping, monitoring our newly established marine reserves, and environmental research on wave energy installation. Presently, there is insufficient state funding to meet the information needs for management and the additional demand created by current use conflicts. With increasing resource use competition, continued economic stress, and demands for ecosystem-based management and spatial planning, the need for comprehensive scientific understanding will increase. These challenges, while daunting, provide historic opportunities. In particular, the development and implementation of enhanced coordination, identification of critical research and monitoring needs, and inclusion of meaningful stakeholder input in strategic planning represents a needed and welcomed paradigm shift. By addressing the needs to enhance funding for agencies and institutions (to support both local and state-level efforts) and secure public confidence in the process, the transition into this new era can be hastened and assured.

In conclusion, this bill is an investment strategy for performing nearshore research which will allow Oregon to make better informed management decisions for utilizing and protecting nearshore resources and increasing social, economic, and environmental benefits for Oregon's citizens. At the end of the day, it's about establishing a funding mechanism to create needed marine research jobs in our coastal communities to better ensure the stewardship of our marine resources.

Sincerely,

Gus Gates
Oregon Policy Manager, Surfrider Foundation