

Testimony

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources April 11, 2013

Dear Co-Chairs Edwards and Unger and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of policy option packages 121 and 122 and other resources that maintain implementation of Marine Reserves. We recognize the difficult task facing you and your colleagues as you make funding choices and appreciate your consideration of these comments during the midst of your deliberation.

The Conservancy is an international, nonprofit organization whose mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. While many people know us for our terrestrial work and partnerships, the Conservancy has recently taken our collaborative conservation approach into the water.

The Conservancy supports marine reserves and protected areas as an option for conserving our ocean resources. Globally, the Conservancy worked with leading scientists to evaluate the potential of marine protected areas and their benefits, especially in communities where poverty is a real and pressing issue. In a recent report, titled “Nature’s Investment Bank,” it was found that marine protected areas in places like Indonesia and the Solomon Islands can lead to the following benefits: improved fish catches, new jobs (mostly in tourism), stronger local governance, and benefits to health. In 2009, a global synthesis of biological effects found that marine reserves can also result in increased biomass, body size of animals, species density, and the number of plants and animals. (Lester et al, Marine Ecology Progress Series, Vol. 384: 33–46, 2009)

In Oregon, the Conservancy has worked to provide science and technical support that helps local communities and other decision makers determine the appropriate siting of marine reserves and protected areas.

In 2013, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife provided the Legislature with a Marine Reserves Program Work Plan. The Work Plan provides a ten-year outlook (2013-2023) for implementing Oregon’s system of marine reserves and protected area sites and addresses the Department’s plans including ecological, social and economic monitoring as well as outreach and public engagement.

The Conservancy supports the Marine Reserves Program Work Plan and thinks it provides an important opportunity to document the ecological and social results of the marine reserves and protected areas. To achieve the Work Plan vision and provide the Legislature with robust and

accurate future results, it is important the agency receive the necessary funds to conduct their research and other activities.

In closing, we look forward to working with the state agencies and local communities in implementing the Work Plan and ask the Legislature to provide ODFW with the requested funds. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jena Carter
Marine and Coast Director
Oregon Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.