

# Oregon Coastal Caucus

Sen. Jeff Kruse, Chair  
Rep. Debbie Boone, Vice Chair  
Sen. Betsy Johnson  
Sen. Arnie Roblan  
Sen. Doug Whitsell  
Rep. Wayne Krieger  
Rep. David Gornberg  
Rep. Caddy McKeown

April 10, 2013

Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Peter Buckley, Co-Chairs  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 3451 – Ocean-Going Research Vessel Program

Dear Senator Devlin and Representative Buckley:

Thank you for considering House Bill 3451 which would appropriate \$330,000 during the 2013-2015 biennium for the operation of a research vessel. It does so in a manner designed to address issues of concern to Oregon scientists and public policy makers. It is an important step toward ensuring that Oregon continues to play a leadership role in the research and management of our marine environment.

We support this bill for four reasons:

1. Funding research vessel operations assures the continued presence of a federally-funded vessel in Oregon;
2. Maintaining a vessel in Oregon provides over \$3 million annually in economic benefits that accrue to the central coast and the research community;
3. Federally-funded research vessels provide invaluable scientific information necessary to better understand the changes occurring along the Pacific Coast – changes that affect the safety, environmental quality, and productivity well beyond the territorial sea; and
4. Funding will create an effective opportunity for Oregon students to engage in research and experience first-hand the exciting aspects of Oregon's marine environment.

**1. State support will help keep a Federal research vessel in Oregon.**

For nearly 40 years Oregon has benefited both economically and scientifically from the presence of federally-funded research vessels operated by Oregon State University (OSU). Among those states that operate federally-funded vessels, Oregon is unique: we are the only state providing no support for the operation of the vessels located in our ports. Rhode Island—with a fraction of Oregon's coastline and approximately twenty-five percent of Oregon's population—currently invests \$1 million per biennium to support a federal research vessel operated by the University of Rhode Island.

As the federal government evaluates and replaces its aging fleet it is more likely to dry-dock, or opt not to replace, limited-operation vessels. Accordingly, a lack of state support for operations—which translates to the loss of vessel days—places Oregon in jeopardy of losing “our” vessel in favor of other states contributing to their vessel's operation.

This issue is particularly important now — earlier this year the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded OSU a \$3 million contract to design the next generation of research vessel, which is intended to replace the vessel currently ported in Newport. This lucrative responsibility provides Oregon with a distinctive edge as NSF considers where to locate this vessel once constructed. However, lack of state support for vessel operations may counteract the benefits created by OSU's success in securing the design contract.

Sen. Jeff Kruse, Chair  
Rep. Debbie Boone, Vice Chair  
Sen. Betsy Johnson  
Sen. Amie Roblan  
Sen. Doug Whitsett  
Rep. Wayne Krieger  
Rep. David Gombert  
Rep. Caddy McKeown

**2. Oregon currently realizes well over \$3 million/year in economic benefits from the presence of the vessel in Newport.**

The \$330,000 investment during the 2013-2015 biennium will establish the track record needed to retain an enterprise currently providing over ten times that amount each year to the Central Oregon coast. The research vessel Oceanus currently contributes these economic benefits through crew salaries; maintenance contracts required to keep the vessel seaworthy; fuel, supplies and other elements supporting its operations; and the scientists and scholars who travel to Newport to conduct research. While increased operation costs are anticipated when Oceanus is replaced by the next generation vessel, the state's return on investment will also increase given the magnitude of the expected economic benefits.

**3. Federal research vessels create invaluable knowledge and information important to Oregon's economy, environment, and safety.**

Ocean research is vital to all Oregonians, regardless of where we live. Ocean research vessels enable scientists to better understand the short-term and long-term changes in our coastal environment and how these changes affect our ocean resources – fisheries, coastline hazards, and other significant resources.

Ten days of ship time each year would enable a variety of scientific research and observation programs, as well as state agency operations and tasks. These efforts could include:

- Mapping of the sea floor in Oregon's territorial sea and analysis of marine ecosystems as part of proposed marine protected areas;
- Assessments of fisheries in conjunction with ODFW's new Nearshore Strategy; and
- Deployment of instrumentation to support monitoring of the impacts of wave energy systems and marine reserves, etc.

The signs of significant and long-term changes in ocean ecosystems are appearing and demonstrate the need for new investments ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of our ocean and the people depending on it. If Oregon fails to sustain Oceanus operations, it is quite possible that the West Coast's leading edge in ocean observation, research, and modeling would be conducted solely by states to our north and south.

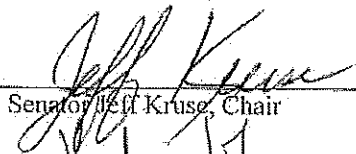
Sen. Jeff Kruse, Chair  
Rep. Debbie Boone, Vice Chair  
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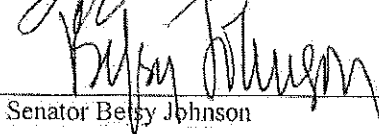
4. Funding will enable Oregon students to engage in environmental research.

Education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has been shown to be more effective when students are exposed to practical challenges and real-world opportunities. HB 3451 will provide Oregon students enrolled in any public university an opportunity to participate in science-based activities aboard an OSU research vessel. Students will be given advantages in a learning environment that are already provided to thousands of students in states throughout the country. By enabling students to define and compete for research efforts of their own, HB 3451 will create a leadership role for Oregon in the design of new curricula in STEM fields while also providing progress toward the State's 40-40-20 educational goal.

For these reasons we urge the committee to approve the funding incorporated in HB 3451.

Sincerely,

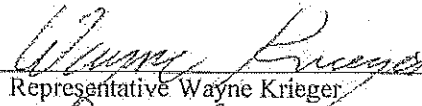
  
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Senator Jeff Kruse, Chair

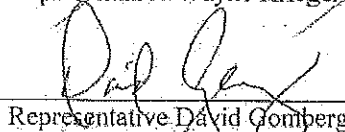
  
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Senator Betsy Johnson

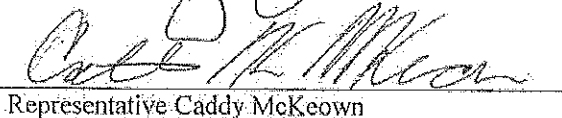
  
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Senator Arnie Roblan

  
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Senator Doug Whitsett

  
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Representative Deborah Boone, Vice-Chair

  
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Representative Wayne Krieger

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative David Gomberg

  
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Representative Caddy McKeown

Addressees:

Co-Chair Sen. Richard Devlin  
Co-Vice Chair Sen. Betsy Johnson  
Co-Vice Chair Rep. Nancy Nathanson  
Sen. Rod Monroe  
Sen. Chuck Thomsen  
Sen. Jackie Winters  
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Sen. Bill Hansell  
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Rep. Tobias Read  
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Rep. Bob Jenson  
Rep. Mike McLane  
Rep. Greg Smith  
Rep. Jennifer Williamson



**Bill Hall**  
**County Commissioner**

Courthouse, Room 110  
225 W. Olive Street  
Newport, Oregon 97365  
(541) 265-4100  
FAX (541) 265-4176

March 28, 2013

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 3451**

Chair Bailey and members of the Committee: Thank you for your time today. I am Bill Hall, Chair of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, and I am here in support of House Bill 3451. For several years, our county government has been providing advocacy and resources to further the development of Yaquina Bay as a hub for ocean science. There are significant reasons from both a scientific and economic standpoint to support this. The oceans are truly our final frontier. Even though they cover the majority of our globe, our potential for scientific discovery remains huge. The implications for climate change, renewable energy production, the global food supply and the overall health of our planet are mind boggling. Ocean science is also emerging as a major economic driver for the central coast. It generated 60 million dollars in personal income last year and supplanted timber production as Lincoln County's third largest industry.

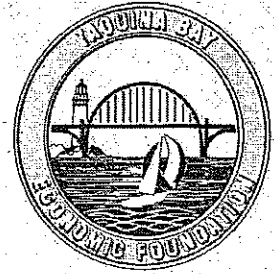
Oregon State University has a long and proud history in Ocean science. This proposal for an Oceangoing Research Program builds on OSU's decades of expertise in ocean research, stretching back to the launch of the Wecoma in 1975. It opens the opportunity to leverage federal and other funding resources for this important work, as well as providing strong direction for that work.

We often talk about the day when Newport will be known as "the Woods Hole of the West." But I look to the day when that great ocean research center in Massachusetts will be thought of as "the Newport of the east."



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

## Tillamook County



*Land of Cheese, Trees and Ocean Breeze*

Board of Commissioners  
Mark Labhart, Bill Baertlein, Tim Josi,  
201 Laurel Avenue  
Tillamook, Oregon 97141  
Phone 503-842-3403  
Fax 503-842-1384  
TTY Oregon Relay Service

March 27, 2013

Representative Jules Bailey  
House Energy and Environment  
Committee Chair

RE: Support of HB 3451

Dear Representative Bailey:

Thank you for providing an opportunity for the House Energy and Environment Committee to consider HB 3451. This bill appropriates \$330,000 during the 2013-15 biennium for the operation of a research vessel in a manner designed to address issues of concern to Oregon scientists and public policy makers. It is an important step toward ensuring that Oregon will continue to play a leadership role in the research and management of our marine environment.

Tillamook County supports this bill for four reasons:

1. Funding research vessel operations assures the continued presence of a federally-funded vessel in Oregon;
2. Maintaining a vessel in Oregon provides over \$3 million in economic benefits that accrue to the central coast and the research community;
3. Federally-funded research vessels provide invaluable scientific information necessary to better understand the changes occurring along the Pacific Coast – changes that affect the safety, environmental quality, and productivity well beyond the territorial sea; and
4. Funding will support an effective opportunity for Oregon students to engage in research and see first-hand the exciting aspects of environmental research.

### **1. State support will help keep a Federal research vessel in Oregon.**

For nearly 40 years Oregon has benefitted both economically and scientifically as from the presence of federally-funded research vessels operated by Oregon State University (OSU). Among those states that operate federally-funded vessels, Oregon is unique: We are the only state that provides no support for the operation of the vessels that are located in our ports. Rhode Island, with a coastline a fraction of ours and a population about a quarter of Oregon's, currently invests \$1 million per biennium to support a federal research vessel operated by the University of Rhode Island.

Representative Jules Bailey  
House Energy and Environment  
Committee Chair  
March 27, 2013  
Page 2

As the federal government replaces its aging fleet, the lack of state support places Oregon in jeopardy of losing "our" vessel in favor of other states that contribute to the operation of their vessels. Lack of state support for operations translates to the loss of vessel days. And when evaluating its fleet, the federal government will more likely opt to dry-dock or not replace those vessels that are limited in their operation.

This issue is particularly important now, because earlier this year the National Science Foundation (NSF) recently awarded a \$3 million contract to OSU to design the next generation of research vessel intended to replace the vessel currently ported in Newport. This lucrative responsibility provides Oregon with a distinctive edge when it comes to deciding where to locate this vessel once it is constructed. However, lack of state support for vessel operations may counteract the benefits created by OSU's successful competition for the design contract.

**2. Oregon currently realizes well over \$3 million/year in economic benefits as a result of the presence of the vessel in Newport.**

The investment of \$330,000 during the 2013-15 biennium will begin a track record needed to retain an enterprise that currently provides over ten times that amount each year to the Central Oregon coast. The research vessel Oceanus currently contributes these economic benefits through the salaries paid to its crew, the maintenance contracts needed to keep it seaworthy, the fuel, supplies and other elements that support its operations, and the scientists and scholars who come to Newport to conduct their research. While the operation costs are expected to increase when the Oceanus is replaced by the next generation vessel, the return on investment will also increase given the magnitude of the expected economic benefits.

**3. Federal research vessels create invaluable knowledge and information important to Oregon's economy, environment, and safety.**

Ocean research is vital to all Oregonians, regardless of where we live. Ocean research vessels enable scientists to better understand the short-term and long-term changes in our coastal environment and how these changes affect our ocean resources – fisheries, coastline hazards, and other significant resources.

Ten days of ship time each year would enable a variety of scientific research and observation programs, as well as state agency operations and tasks. These efforts could include:

- Mapping of the sea floor in Oregon's territorial sea and analysis of marine ecosystems as part of proposed marine protected areas;
- Assessments of fisheries in conjunction with ODFW's new Nearshore Strategy; and

Representative Jules Bailey  
House Energy and Environment  
Committee Chair

March 27, 2013

Page 3

- Deployment of instrumentation to support monitoring of the impacts of wave energy systems and marine reserves, etc.

The signs of significant and perhaps long term changes in our ocean ecosystems are now appearing and demonstrate the need for new investments that will ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our ocean and the people who depend on it. If Oregon fails to sustain operations of the Oceanus, it is quite possible that the West Coast leading edge ocean observation, research, and modeling would be conducted solely by the states to the north and south of us.

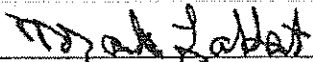
#### 4. Funding will enable Oregon students to engage in environmental research

Education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has been shown to be more effective when students are exposed to practical challenges and real-world opportunities. HB 3451 will provide Oregon students enrolled in any public university an opportunity to participate in science-based activities aboard an OSU research vessel. Students will be given advantages in a learning environment that are already provided to thousands of students in states throughout the country. By enabling students to define and compete for research efforts of their own, HB 3451 will create a leadership role for Oregon in the design of new curricula in STEM fields while also providing progress toward the State's 40-40-20 educational goal.

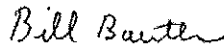
For these reasons Tillamook County urges the committee to approve HB 3451 so that it can be considered by the Joint Ways and Means Committee.

Sincerely,

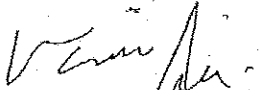
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR  
TILLAMOOK COUNTY, OREGON



Mark Labhart, Chairperson



Bill Baertlein, Vice Chairperson



Tim Josi, Commissioner

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March 24, 2013

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

RE: HB 3451: Establishes Oceangoing Research Vessel Program

Dear Chairman Bailey,

The City of Newport supports the passage of HB 3451 that will provide \$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 in the US 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.

The City of Newport was gratified 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 *Oceanus*, that currently operates out of Yaquina Bay. 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 loss for the economy of the central Oregon coast.

The City of Newport recognizes the value of ocean research, both economically to our local community and scientifically to the entire state. The passage of HB 3451 ensures that Oregon scientists can continue to conduct needed research within Oregon's coastal waters and beyond.

Sincerely,

Sandra Roumagoux, Mayor  
City of Newport

# NEWPORT

169 SW COAST HWY  
NEWPORT, OREGON 97365

COAST GUARD CITY, USA



OREGON

[www.newportoregon.gov](http://www.newportoregon.gov)

MOBETSU, JAPAN, SISTER CITY

March 25, 2013

Representative Bailey, Chair  
House Energy and Environment Committee  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3451 - Establishing Oceangoing Research Vessel Program

Dear Chair Bailey:

On behalf of the City of Newport, I am writing to encourage passage of HB 3451 that would provide state funding for a comprehensive ocean research vessel program. The funding would help support research conducted from Oregon State University vessels by students and faculty of OSU. OSU's research helps Newport, other coastal communities, and the state to develop effective marine and coastal policies related to fisheries, offshore energy, tourism, and conservation.

As you know, OSU was recently awarded a National Science Foundation grant to design a new ocean research vessel. It is believed that once this vessel is completed, it will replace the Oceanus - OSU's current research vessel. The fact that the Oceanus is based in Newport is a big economic boost to this community and the central coast, as the Oceanus purchases fuel and operating supplies locally. The city risks losing the Oceanus and its successor if other states provide greater assurances of financial support committed to vessel operations. Failure to pass HB 3451 could be a huge economic hit for the economy of the central Oregon coast.

Again, we urge passage of HB 3451 as a means to ensure that Oregon practicing scientists and students can continue to perform research within Oregon's coastal waters and beyond.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Voetberg". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jim Voetberg  
City Manager

EST.

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