



Oregon Ocean Science Trust

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TESTIMONY for Senate Bill 281 Louise Solliday, Executive Director Oregon Ocean Science Trust

Thank you for hearing Senate Bill 281 which would provide funding to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) to operate a grant program to fund priority research and monitoring projects in Oregon's nearshore.

Legislative Members

Sen Arnie Roblan

Rep David Gomberg

OOST was appointed by the State Land Board in October 2015 under ORS 196.565-196.569 but no budget resources were provided during the current biennium to carry out our responsibilities. The Department of State Lands provides administrative support to the Trust and covers the costs of our meetings. OOST was created to ensure increased knowledge and understanding of Oregon's ocean and coastal resources.

Since our formation we have adopted by-laws and developed an inventory of current research and monitoring projects in the nearshore. OOST hosted a two day science workshop in 2016 to assist us in identifying priority research and monitoring questions that need to be answered, should funding become available. The workshop was funded by The Nature Conservancy using a grant from the Packard Foundation. The priority questions adopted by OOST are:

- What are the distribution and abundance of economically and ecologically important species, and the habitats on which they depend, in the nearshore environment?
- How are economically and ecologically important species and their habitats affected by the changes in the physical, chemical and biological nearshore environment?
- How do changes in ocean conditions affect state and local community vulnerability/resilience? What are the local drivers of changing ocean conditions?
- What options exist for adapting to, mitigating and possibly minimizing changes in ocean conditions that affect economically and ecologically important species, and the habitats on which they depend, in the nearshore environment?
- How does ocean health relate to livability, health and wellbeing, economic prosperity and safety in Oregon and its coastal communities?

OOST has also initiated rulemaking to adopt rules for the competitive grant program called for in ORS 196.566 (4). The public comment period for the draft rules closes on April 14, with OOST scheduled to adopt final rules at its meeting on June 1.

Earlier this year we requested and received a small grant from Lincoln County to help with our work. We are working with ODFW and others to determine the best use of these funds.

OOST is also working with others including the Oregon Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Monitoring Group and the Oregon Ocean Science Benefits Network to ensure our work is coordinated with, and not duplicative of, the work of others on these important issues.

We ask that the committee refer the bill to the Ways and Means Committee for consideration in the 2017-19 budget discussions. We are aware of the budget shortfall facing the state and understand the difficulties funding the many demands on limited budget resources.

Thank you again for your consideration of SB 281. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.