



Oregon

Kate Brown., Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of the Director
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
(503) 947-6044
FAX (503) 947-6042
odfw.com

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**To: The Honorable Senator Frederick, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Witt, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on
Natural Resources**



Senate Bill 1039

**Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 1039. The Department is neutral on the bill but would like to provide background on Ocean Acidification and its impacts to Oregon. Ocean acidification (OA) is the change in ocean pH due to increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and absorption of that CO₂ by the ocean. More acidified waters decrease the growth and productivity of ocean animals, especially shelled animals like oysters and mussels. Oregon is subject to some of the earliest signals of increasing global patterns in OA due to the oceanography of the North Pacific.

Commercial shellfish growers in Oregon have already experienced significant economic loss from OA events over the last 10 years (since 2007). However, it is not just oyster culture that is at stake. Oregon's rural coastal communities depend heavily on our incredibly productive marine ecosystem for our vibrant fisheries, as well as oyster culture, to provide the backbone of our coastal economies. OA threatens the sustainability of this economic backbone because OA impacts are expected to intensify over the coming decades, and are expected to negatively impact native species and ecosystem functions.

Senate Bill 1039 provides both the legislative mandate to elevate OA in Oregon's natural resource policy considerations, as well as the logistical mechanism to implement solutions. This bill directs the development of an OA Coordination Council, which would be comprised of stakeholders, government and academic representatives. The Department plays two central roles in implementing this bill, both in providing leadership to the Council and in providing the logistical (staffing) support to do the work of the Council.

Lastly, passage of this bill formalizes the Oregon legislature's leadership on ocean acidification response, which has been demonstrated in multiple ways over recent years including in the development of the Ocean Science Trust and of the Shellfish Task Force.

CONTACTS:

Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director, (503) 947-6044

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager, (541) 867-0300 x226