

SB 1039 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Action Date: 04/10/17

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Baertschiger Jr, Dembrow, Olsen, Prozanski, Roblan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Makes legislative finding that ocean acidification and hypoxia severely endanger the state's commercially and culturally significant ocean resources, and declares it to be state policy to ensure a coordinated, effective response. Establishes Oregon Coordinating Council on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (Council) consisting of 13 members. Establishes that Council duties include: identification of research and monitoring activities needed to better understand changing ocean chemistry and the potential impacts of ocean acidification and hypoxia; identification of actions and initiatives to address Oregon's vulnerabilities to ocean acidification and hypoxia; and development of a long-term coordinating strategy among state agencies, academia, the federal government and industry. Authorizes Council to develop a report on the socioeconomic vulnerability from ocean acidification and develop recommendations for the Oregon Ocean Science Trust, state agencies and others on priority, strategic research to address gaps in understanding of ocean acidification and hypoxia. Directs Council to submit biennial report to Legislative Assembly and Ocean Policy Advisory Council by September 15 of each even-numbered year.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Past efforts to address effect of acidification on oyster shells
- Causes of ocean acidification
- Oregon State University research to address issue

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oceans absorb a portion of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) released into the atmosphere each year. Ocean acidification is the term given to the chemical changes in the ocean that result from CO₂ absorption. Hypoxia refers to oxygen-deficient waters.

In 2013, the California Ocean Protection Council asked the California Ocean Science Trust to establish and coordinate a scientific advisory panel in collaboration with that state's ocean management counterparts in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The resulting West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel (Panel) was charged with summarizing the current state of knowledge and developing scientific consensus about available management options to address ocean acidification and hypoxia on the West Coast. According to the Panel, ocean acidification and hypoxia frequently occur together and share a common set of causes, including increased atmospheric CO₂ levels and local nutrient and organic carbon inputs. The Panel reached consensus on six major findings, including that ocean acidification and hypoxia will have severe environmental, ecological and economic consequences for the West Coast and requires a concerted regional management focus.

Senate Bill 1039 would declare it to be state policy to ensure a coordinated, effective response to ocean acidification and hypoxia.