

SB 255 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/25, 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$500,000 in general fund to the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Oregon to leverage private investment and replace a research vessel. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2019.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Marine reserves
- Marine biology research
- State of current vessel
- Need for new vessel
- Public and private partnerships
- Economic development of county
- Student interest in marine biology and oceanography
- Summer programs
- Women and STEM programs
- Opportunity to share new vessel with other institutions and state agencies
- Hands-on learning
- Local funding for vessel

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Since the 1902s, the University of Oregon (UO) has taught and conducted research in marine biology on the Southern Oregon coast. In 1929, the Army Corps of Engineers provided a portion of the Coos Head Military Reservation to serve as the permanent home for the UO marine biology program. In 1966, UO began operating the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB) as a year-round research and teaching facility. The OIMB helped establish the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and continues to collaborate with the organization. In addition, OIMB offers the only undergraduate marine biology major in Oregon and provides ongoing educational opportunities to K-12 students, college students, and the public. Senate Bill 255 provides funding for a new research vessel to facilitate research and education in Oregon territorial sea and estuaries.