

DATE: April 23, 2019
TO: Sen. Fred Girod, Co-chair, Rep. Paul Holvey, Co-chair and Committee Members
FROM: Carrie E. Lewis, President/CEO, Oregon Coast Aquarium
RE: HB5030 Aquarium Appropriation



On behalf of the Oregon Coast Aquarium, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Joint Ways & Means Capital Construction Subcommittee April 19th. Our board, 85 staff and 400 volunteers are so grateful for your thoughtful consideration of \$10Million appropriation to fund the Aquarium's capital campaign. Details and support letters for our campaign are available on OLIS. To summarize, the construction project priorities are: 1) Remodel the Entryway/Café, 2) Create a Children's NaturePlay area, 3) Enhance Three Core Galleries, and 4) Build a new Marine Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

We know you have hard decisions to make, and think our capital projects align with all you care about. Below are key points that summarize why we believe our projects merit support.

The Aquarium boosts the State's economy:

- Since opening in 1992, we've attracted 15Million visitors: 35% from out of state
- Our tourism draw alone has an annual economic impact of \$100M to this county
- Visitation bumps up 5% with new exhibits - a \$5Million increase with new temporary or permanent exhibits

The Aquarium provides education:

- Our School Outreach presents to 124 remote and low-income schools in 21 counties
- We develop ocean science curriculum and provide professional development for teachers that support the State's Environmental Literacy Plan
- We created *Oceanscape* – a distance learning network providing digital content for teachers
- We partner with higher education to give interns and researchers real-world experiences, and inspire youth volunteers to consider marine science careers

The Aquarium provides marine wildlife rehabilitation:

- We are 1 of only 3 facilities in the Pacific Northwest, and the only one in Oregon, authorized by ODFW to provide care to injured, endangered marine wildlife like the turtles that wash ashore on our beaches.

This is the first time the Aquarium has come to the State for support, but we did a lot of work first. We've raised \$6Million from major foundations, charter members, and long-time philanthropists toward our \$18.2Million campaign goal. We are confident we can raise the last \$2.2Million from foundations receptive to "top off" grants, and the general public when we launch our campaign this fall.

Thank you for your service to Oregon, and your thoughtful consideration of our request.

