



February 19, 2021

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery  
Senator Jeff Golden, Chair  
Senator Dallas Heard, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee

**RE: Joint Letter of Support for Senate Bill 126**

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Dear Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery:

The Oregon Department of State Lands and the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay are pleased to provide this joint letter in support of SB 126. As members of the Charleston community and longtime partners, we appreciate your attention and consideration of this bill.

South Slough Reserve has coexisted alongside industry and commerce for more than 50 years. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System program is nonregulatory by design and works collaboratively with coastal economic interests. The formal federal process to adjust a reserve boundary, which this bill will allow South Slough to begin, offers multiple options to ensure neighboring uses will not be impacted by presence of a reserve.

The Department and the Port have a long history of collaboration, demonstrated by the Port's involvement on the South Slough Reserve Management Commission and engagement in the extensive process that led the Reserve to acquire additional lands.

To formalize our commitments to each other and the coastal community, upon passage of SB 126 the Port and South Slough Reserve will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU will clarify that the extension of the South Slough Reserve boundary will not negatively impact the existing industry in the Coos Bay Harbor, nor hinder future economic development in the Port District. Although the South Slough Reserve has no regulatory authority over the Coos Bay Harbor, the MOU shall serve as a written reference point for regulatory bodies overseeing permitting and water quality standards to the agreed upon intentions of SB 126. Other reserves in the national system have used such memorandums to great success.

The Department and the Port thank you for your time and consideration of SB 126 and its potential for positive economic impacts to the south coast and long-term benefits to the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Vicki L. Walker, Director  
Oregon Department of State Lands

John Burns, CEO  
International Port of Coos Bay