



Coastal Oregon Marine
Experiment Station
Oregon State University
Hatfield Marine Science Center
2030 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, Oregon 97365

P 541-867-0385
F 541-867-0345
marineresearch.oregonstate.edu

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**TO: House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water Committee
Representative Ken Helm**

**FR: Will White
Associate Professor**

DT: February 9, 2023

RE: HB 2903 & the 2022 Assessment of Oregon's Marine Reserves

I serve as an Associate Professor at the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station in Newport and am a marine ecologist who has studied the science of marine reserves and provided expert guidance on reserve design and management for the past 15 years. I was the senior author of the report "2022 Assessment of Oregon's Marine Reserves", which we submitted to the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) in August 2022. This university-led assessment of the Oregon Marine Reserves Program was contracted by Oregon Ocean Science Trust and mandated by the legislature in 2012 with the passage of Senate Bill 1510.

In compiling our report, the team followed the guidance from the state legislation and executive orders enacting the Marine Reserves, as well as the evaluation framework established by OPAC.

The key finding of our report was that the Oregon Marine Reserves program had been designed, implemented, and managed consistent with the goals and objectives of the enabling legislation. Our report made several technical recommendations for ODFW's continuing management of the Marine Reserves.

In the report, we also produced recommendations for legislative action. These are found in detail in our report, but in brief were to:

- a) allocate funding to ODFW to enable the continued monitoring and management of the Marine Reserves program, including monitoring effects on people and communities;
- b) mandate that ODFW should develop an Adaptive Management Plan for the Marine Reserves; and

- c) define a process and set of priorities by which socioeconomic information could be used to affect policy decisions surrounding the Marine Reserves.

These recommendations follow our team's understanding – as internationally recognized experts in the field – of current best practices for marine reserve management and governance, and present the best way for Oregon's Marine Reserves program to meet the goals and objectives set forth in the original legislation. The final point (c) is particularly important because ODFW has documented numerous positive, negative, and neutral effects of the Marine Reserves on different communities and individuals within Oregon. However, there is no legislative guidance for how those effects should be considered in management decisions. All of the recommendations were endorsed by OPAC, and they appear in the text of HB 2903.

My coauthors and I are happy to answer any questions regarding our recommendations or the ecological and social science of Marine Reserves.

Respectfully,

J. Wilson White
Associate Professor
Oregon State University
will.white@oregonstate.edu