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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water  
Oregon Legislature

Testimony in support of HB 2903: Relating to Marine Reserves

Submitted by Dick Vander Schaaf, Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director

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Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

As Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Oregon, I am pleased to write in support of HB 2903. TNC is a science-based, non-partisan organization, with over 80,000 supporters in Oregon alone, committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends.

In Oregon, TNC has been involved with the marine reserves program since its earliest beginnings. The program currently consists of five marine reserves, each named for local natural landmarks - Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, Otter Rock, Cape Perpetua, and Redfish Rocks and is administered by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Marine Reserve Program.

Since its inception, TNC has been a key partner in helping to stand up the marine reserve program. Examples of our efforts including installing educational signage, supporting community teams, and conducting research in the reserves including collecting data on sea star wasting disease and taking ocean acidification measurements in partnership with Oregon State University (OSU) and local communities. Today, we are proud to be here celebrating ten years of the successful marine reserve program and asking for your support for HB 2903.

Oregon's marine reserve system is the state's first long-term nearshore ocean conservation and monitoring program. This is also the only ecosystem-focused, fisheries-independent monitoring program designed to track and understand the unprecedented oceanographic changes occurring in Oregon's state waters.

As we celebrate ten years of ODFW's successful implementation of the marine reserves program, as documented in the ODFW report, [Marine Reserves Program Synthesis Report: 2009-2021](#), we also look for opportunities to continue to protect and enhance these reserves through the support and passage of this bill. HB 2903 calls upon ODFW to develop an adaptive management plan for Oregon's five marine reserves, assess the capacity of these reserves to

enhance ecological resilience to environmental disturbances, enhance outreach and engagement activities, and support engagement with federally recognized tribes.

HB 2903 directs ODFW to work with communities, including commercial and recreational fishing fleets, to ensure the science derived from the marine reserves is useful and incorporates local knowledge. HB 2903 is critical to the future success of the marine reserve program, ensuring that the investments and scientific knowledge gained from these marine reserves is used to improve ocean management and continue to educate and inspire Oregonians and our coastal visitors.

TNC fully supports HB 2903 and the continued funding and increased capacity to conserve and enhance our Oregon marine reserves. We thank Chair Helm and the members of this committee for your leadership and steadfast dedication to this critical issue and urge you to move this bill forward this session.

Respectfully,

Dick Vander Schaaf  
Associate Director Coast and Marine Program  
The Nature Conservancy of Oregon