

February 7, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court St. NE, H-490
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Please support House Bill 2903, Oregon Marine Reserve Program

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Committee:

As residents of the unincorporated north coast community of Falcon Cove, the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve is our front yard. When we walk the beach, visit the tidepools sometimes with Dungeness crabs and Sea stars, watch the sea birds and eagles, and hope to catch a glimpse of marine life like seals, sea lions and whales as well as other wildlife, we are always conscious that we share this incredible place with all those creatures that also call it home. No matter how familiar a place, the near shore waters continue to hold mysteries. Ones that must be explored and understood as the Oregon Marine Program has set out to do and must be allowed to stay the course.

Oregon's first two marine reserves (Redfish, Otter Rock) went into effect in 2012 with two others (Cascade Head, Cape Perpetua) in 2014, and finally Cape Falcon in 2016. After the first 10 years of protections, the Marine Reserve Program completed a comprehensive Synthesis Report and OSU ecological and social scientists recently submitted an independent assessment of the program. The next needed step is implementation of the recommendations that came out of these documents.

HB 2903 allocates funds to allow ODFW to continue the Marine Reserves Program at the necessary capacity. This includes funding for new human resources and programmatic activities, including management, policy, and program administration; ecological monitoring; human dimensions monitoring; and outreach and community engagement. It also directs ODFW to develop an adaptive management plan. Finally, it requires ODFW to develop a detailed collaborative process through which social monitoring data can be interpreted to affect policy decisions.

We urge you to support House Bill 2903, regarding the Oregon Marine Reserve Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Residents of Falcon Cove and Cove Beach. Oregon

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