



February 8, 2023

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

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2903, which will help move forward recommendations of the Oregon State University Marine Reserve Assessment Report as well as by the Ocean Policy Advisory Council to build on the Oregon's marine reserves and marine protected area program. This legislation will ensure the program takes the right steps to incorporate an adaptive management process and resiliency measures much needed in the face of the increasing impact of climate change and other stressors in our nearshore waters. Ten years ago Oregon made a commitment to move forward with this innovative program. Now it's time to strengthen it. Passage of this bill will be a big step to ensure Oregon's nearshore waters will be productive for generations to come.

Oregon's 10 years with the marine reserve and protected area program has been a big success. The "natural laboratory" that these sites create have enabled cutting edge research examining some of the most important and pressing challenges facing Oregon's marine environment. For example, collaboration between OSU scientists, ODFW, and local community members (community scientists) have helped assess the impact of increasing ocean acidification on the marine ecosystem. The data collected in marine reserves has also helped provide more detailed information on fisheries stock assessments that ultimately help improve fishing opportunities. In addition to vital research, marine reserves have bolstered coastal economies supporting over \$750,000 in contracts to local fishers and charters to support collaborative research.

Hundreds of thousands of Oregonians have connected with the marine reserves through activities led by community groups and other groups like Portland Audubon. This has included community science opportunities, speaker series, and other community events that have enabled the public to connect with these amazing places and help contribute to their understanding.

We urge you to move HB 2903 forward and support it throughout the legislative session. For a relatively small price tag, we can help Oregon's ocean make big gains in knowledge and sustainability.

Sincerely,

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