



COAST RANGE
ASSOCIATION

February 9, 2023

To: Representative Ken Helm, Chair

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

RE: Support House Bill 2903, Oregon Marine Reserve Program

Dear Chair Helm and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Coast Range Association, I submit this testimony in support of HB 2903. Oregon's Marine Reserves Program has been a tremendous success story, and we urge the Legislature to enshrine and strengthen that success by passage of this bill.

We at the Coast Range Association are focused on initiatives that uplift both the economy *and* the ecology of Western Oregon and our near-shore marine habitats. By preserving critical habitat for conservation and research while also contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to coastal economies, the Marine Reserves Program exemplifies that ethos.

We are grateful to see that HB 2903 has the bipartisan support of the entire coastal caucus. It is vitally important that the legislature uphold and strengthen our commitments to economically struggling rural communities. These investments help restore trust in a population which often sees government either absent or negatively impacting them. These communities came together to support Marine Reserves, and they deserve the continued and consistent investment that a fully funded Marine Reserve Program provides.

We understand that the Legislature is looking at a difficult budget this session, and that hard choices will have to be made. Passage of HB 2903 and a fully funded Marine Reserves Program is not one of those choices. The Marine Reserves Program requires consistent investment, and in return pays manyfold dividends through vital scientific research, strengthened rural economies, and long-term ocean health.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your commitment to public service. Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Gaskill', is positioned above the typed name.

Michael Gaskill
Marine Programs Director,
Coast Range Association
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