

Submitter: Vaughn Robison

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural
Resources

Measure: SB5509

Co-chairs Dembrow and Pham, members of the committee,

I appreciate your consideration of this written testimony regarding the importance of ODFW's Marine Reserves Program's Community Engagement Project Lead position. My testimony kindly requests funds be allocated in ODFW's budget to reinstate this position.

My name is Frederick "Vaughn" Robison. I'm a proud fifth-generation Oregon coast resident and member of a prominent fishing family from Depoe Bay. I'm also proud of my family's three generations of engagement with the Oregon Marine Reserves—which is highly unique. Our engagement is driven not only by a tradition of participating in existing opportunities but also by our commitment to proactively creating new ones to help benefit our community.

Our engagement involves my father and uncle who selected areas of our fishing grounds to sacrifice to become marine reserves in exchange for producing science to benefit our fisheries. Our engagement includes my grandfather who was contracted by ODFW to act as a liaison between the agency and the fishing community of Depoe Bay during the socially tense establishment of the marine reserves. Our engagement also includes employing my uncle's charter fishing vessel and knowledge to help facilitate the science the Marine Reserves Program is mandated to produce. My personal engagement includes volunteering my fishing skills to collect data that is necessary for this science. My own paid engagement includes as a communication practitioner contracted by the program to share stories of locals' relationships to and roles within the reserves. Further, my engagement as a social scientist contributed to the mandated monitoring of the marine reserves' social and economic impacts on fishing communities like my own.

Funding the community engagement position is essential for ODFW to share with my community the 10 years' worth of science the Marine Reserve Program has produced. This science, after all, is one of the benefits that fishing communities expected to receive when they sacrificed areas of their fishing grounds to become marine reserves. Unlike my family, many fishing community members haven't been engaged by ODFW since the reserves were established. I can attest that these community members are anxious to receive the payoff of their sacrificial investment. While they wait, many are riddled with misinformation regarding the objectives of the marine reserves and what they may or may not realistically produce. A community

engagement position is also critical to help correct these misunderstandings and reset these expectations.

In addition to sharing the science, I also want to note that engagement is essential for public support for, and community participation with, the Marine Reserves Program. This is evidenced by my family's myriad forms of engagement while other fishing community members have yet to be engaged or have actively disengaged from the program in the absence of a community engagement position. Further, this notion is echoed by the suggestions of the panel of academics who performed the program's decadal review. These expert suggestions center HB2903, which serves as the future for the Oregon Marine Reserves and calls for further engagement with fishing communities. It is unrealistic for ODFW's Marine Reserves Program to effectively facilitate engagement without a designated community engagement position.

Sincerely,

Frederick "Vaughn" Robison