

Submitter: Danielle Maillard  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Hello and thank you to the committee. My name is Danielle Maillard, I'm a resident of Portland, OR and I am passionate about equitable and meaningful access to the ocean; both for conservation and recreation and education purposes. Oregon's proposed legislative budget would remove funding for the Marine Reserve Program's Community Engagement Project Leader position, a critical role that serves as the nexus between the science and the coastal community. As a programs manager at a non-profit that focuses on pedestrian safety and advocacy in East Portland, I am very familiar with being a liaison between the interests of community members and the interests of bureaucracies that inherently have the upper hand in informing my work, because they fund it. I know that in your roles now and outside of the legislature, many of you are familiar with this same liaison-type work and have been in uncomfortable positions because of it.

The Community Engagement Project Leader of ODFW's Marine Reserve Program is an important connection point between coastal communities and Marine Reserves, and our communities suffer without that investment. It is crucial that people feel that they have someone to vouch for them and their most basic needs. Diversity, equity and inclusion have no foundation if there is not somebody on the ground doing the authentic work of engaging with people who would otherwise have no agency or access in decision-making spaces. Community engagement positions are how we advance effective environmental justice programming.

I urge you to reinstate the Community Engagement Project Leader of ODFW's Marine Reserve Program. Please also support the Marine Reserves investments in HB 2903 to maximize the community and ecological benefits of these pristine coastal resources. These recommendations come from a decades-long science and social review of the program with bipartisan support, aimed at strengthening community resilience and adaptation to coastal climate change and now is the time to make those investments.