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November 18, 2025

Sen. Janeen Sollman  
Chair  
Senate Interim Committee  
on Energy & Environment  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Sen. David Brock Smith  
Vice-Chair  
Senate Interim Committee  
on Energy & Environment  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Sollman and Vice-Chair Brock Smith:

I am writing on behalf of the Elakha Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration of sea otters to Oregon's coastal ecosystems. As advocates for science-based conservation, we know that sea otters play a vital role in marine ecology, with multifaceted benefits to support balanced and thriving coastal environments. We believe that sea otter reintroduction in Oregon would provide clear economic benefits across several sectors, particularly in tourism, fisheries, and environmental services. Thank you for holding an informational meeting this week on the “Growth of the Blue Economy.”

The Elakha Alliance contracted research firms to analyze the economic impacts of sea otter reintroduction in Oregon. According to one analysis,<sup>1</sup> sea otter reintroduction is projected to boost tourism significantly, generating approximately \$3.5 million in additional annual spending in the Southern Oregon Coast region (covering Coos and Curry Counties). The increase is driven by attracting new visitors interested in wildlife viewing, with estimates suggesting over \$3.4 million in revenue from these additions alone.

A second study<sup>2</sup> found that, in addition to tourism, sea otters would foster healthier kelp forests through trophic cascades, leading to increased finfish production and commercial harvest

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<sup>1</sup> “Oregon Sea Otter Reintroduction Economic Study, Initial Estimates of Economic Impact and Discussion of Economic Value” (The Research Group, May 2022)

<sup>2</sup> “Sea Otter Reintroduction to the Southern Oregon Coast: Projected Regional Travel Impacts”. (Dean Runyan Associates, 2023)

values. Annual gains in nearshore groundfish could reach \$180,000 in Yaquina Bay/Otter Rock, \$78,000 in Cape Arago/Coos Bay, \$389,000 in Port Orford/Cape Blanco, and \$321,000 in Rogue Reef/Crook Point. This not only supports commercial fishing but also encourages recreational angling, further stimulating local economies.

Furthermore, enhanced kelp and seagrass growth would contribute to blue carbon sequestration, providing long-term economic value through climate mitigation, with the highest potential in areas like Port Orford/Cape Blanco.

Sea otter reintroduction represents a forward-thinking investment in Oregon's blue economy, through sustainable tourism and supporting resilient marine ecosystems that would benefit coastal communities. We respectfully request your support for advancing sea otter restoration efforts and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further or provide additional resources. Please feel free to contact me at [jane@elakhaalliance.org](mailto:jane@elakhaalliance.org).

Sincerely,



Jane Bacchieri  
Executive Director  
Elakha Alliance