

## Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

**Re: SB 1525**

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith and members of the committee, for the record, I'm Lisa DeBruyckere, the Director of Strategic Initiatives and Programs for the Oregon Ocean Science Trust. I have a few brief comments about a piece of SB 1525 that deals with the Oregon Ocean Science Trust.

The Trust plays a crucial, independent role in funding and coordinating scientific research that supports Oregon's coastal economy, sustainable fisheries, and resilience to stressors affecting our ocean and coast.

We have successfully and accountably dispersed nearly \$2 million in competitive grant funding for critical research on ocean acidification and hypoxia and nearshore ocean resources. All grants have resulted in completed, high-impact scientific research projects.

However, we have been limited in maximizing the state's investments in ocean science by leveraging state dollars with federal and private funds because we lack a 501(c)(3) arm of our organization. This leaves critical research areas—like changing impacts to economically important species—underfunded.

The solution is the technical amendment in SB 1525 that explicitly grants us the authority to establish a supporting 501(c)(3) foundation. This Foundation will serve as the dedicated fundraising arm for OOST, allowing it to competitively pursue large grants and donations. And it's a model that is standard practice across Oregon's successful public institutions. Oregon Parks Forever and Oregon Zoo are 501(c)(3) entities that raise millions to support the missions of their respective state bodies.

By securing non-state funding, the OOST will sustainably accelerate critical ocean research essential for understanding and mitigating existing and emergent threats to our ocean and coastal resources – research that is paramount to protecting the economic stability and public health of Oregonians and the communities dependent upon these resources.

To summarize, giving the Oregon Ocean Science Trust the ability to create a 501(c)(3) is technically clean, fiscally non-controversial, and urgently needed. It is forward-thinking in that it ensures Oregon can both sustain and accelerate essential scientific ocean research that benefits the entire State of Oregon.

On behalf of the Oregon Ocean Science Trust, thank you for considering this bill, and for your service to the State of Oregon.

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