

Daniel Scotton
Executive Director
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now
February 5th, 2026

Testimony supporting SB 1525

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Daniel Scotton, Executive Director of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), an organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and encourage state action to address it. SOCAN is also a member of the Coalition for Common Ground, with organizations representing Coos, Curry, and Del Norte counties. Respectfully I offer this testimony on behalf of SOCAN in support of Senate Bill 1525.

A Blue Economy Task Force presents a timely opportunity to support Oregon's rural coastal communities, many of which are still navigating economic recovery following long-term declines in timber-related employment. A just transition requires governmental support to assist communities as they reorient away from historically extractive or declining industries toward more environmentally sustainable economic alternatives. SB 1525 creates space for coordinated planning that can align workforce development, sustainable industry growth, and ecosystem protection in regions that have long powered Oregon's economy.

Notably, both the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board, and Northwest Oregon Works have already identified the maritime industry as a priority sector. A dedicated Blue Economy Task Force would allow these existing efforts to be aligned, amplified, and strategically coordinated rather than operating in parallel.

Many of the industries captured within the "blue economy" are already traded sectors, or could be more fully aligned as such through coordination with the newly unveiled Oregon Prosperity Council. This strategic orienteering—helping regions navigate toward coordinated investment and workforce priorities—could help attract increased investment and technical support from Business Oregon and regional economic development districts along the coast. A task force structure offers a mechanism to connect workforce pipelines, business development, and regional planning in a way that supports long-term economic resilience.

Importantly, the task force's charge to advance sustainable blue economy businesses while preserving and protecting Oregon's coastal ecosystems helps set a constructive policy direction. By intentionally integrating environmental organizations and research institutions into the task force, SB 1525 increases the likelihood that ecological safeguards, cumulative impacts,

and long-term ecosystem health are incorporated into future recommendations. Healthy coastal and marine ecosystems (estuaries, kelp forests, wetlands) contribute to climate resilience, carbon sequestration ("blue carbon"), and adaptation to sea-level rise.

Finally, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now supports the provision allowing the Oregon Ocean Science Trust to establish a formal 501(c)(3) organization to advance its mission. This step strengthens Oregon's capacity to coordinate trusted science resources and promote meaningful stakeholder engagement around coastal and marine issues.

While this legislative session requires fiscal restraint, SB 1525 is a prudent investment in planning, coordination, and readiness. It positions Oregon to capitalize on future opportunities when conditions are more favorable, ensuring that coastal communities are prepared to move forward together.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to support SB 1525. Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Scotton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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