

Submitter: Rick Osborn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1525
RE: Support for SB 1525

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Rick Osborn, and I live in Coos Bay. I work professionally in economic development and have spent my career supporting rural and coastal communities. I am writing today to strongly support Senate Bill 1525 and the creation of a Blue Economy Task Force and roadmap for Oregon.

The Oregon Coast is home to some of the most hard-working, independent, and entrepreneurial people in our state. Coastal residents have always built their livelihoods at the intersection of innovation and risk—on the water, in working forests, in ports and shipyards, in small businesses, and increasingly in emerging marine and coastal industries. We are problem-solvers by necessity, accustomed to adapting to changing markets, environmental conditions, and global forces well beyond our control.

SB 1525 recognizes an essential truth: the future of Oregon's coastal economy depends on intentional coordination, local expertise, and forward-looking strategy. The Blue Economy is not an abstract concept for us—it is lived reality. It includes commercial and recreational fishing, maritime trades, seafood processing, marine research, renewable energy, tourism, working waterfronts, and innovation tied directly to our natural resources. These sectors already contribute significantly to Oregon's economy, but they are too often siloed, under-resourced, or planned for without meaningful coastal input.

This bill creates the structure needed to bring coastal voices to the table in a coordinated and strategic way. A Blue Economy Task Force ensures that economic development aligns with environmental stewardship, workforce development, infrastructure needs, and community resilience. Importantly, it acknowledges that coastal communities are not asking for handouts—we are asking for partnership, planning, and a roadmap that allows us to build on our strengths.

From the South Coast to the North Coast, we see entrepreneurs launching value-added seafood businesses, ports modernizing facilities, tribes leading in stewardship and innovation, and young people seeking pathways to family-wage jobs that allow them to stay in their home communities. Without a statewide strategy, these efforts

risk remaining fragmented. SB 1525 helps Oregon move from isolated successes to a cohesive vision.

Investing in the Blue Economy is an investment in rural Oregon, in working people, and in long-term economic resilience. It supports local decision-making, respects regional differences, and recognizes that healthy ecosystems and healthy economies are not in conflict—they are interdependent.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1525 and help ensure that Oregon's coastal communities have a strong voice in shaping an economic future that is innovative, sustainable, and grounded in the values of the people who live and work there.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Osborn
Coos Bay
Blue Ridge Strategies