



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Ocean Policy Advisory Council

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June 20, 2025

Governor Tina Kotek
160 State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301



RE: Federal Funding Gaps and Risk to Oregon's Coastal and Ocean Programs

Dear Governor Kotek,

The Ocean Policy Advisory Council hosted a panel to discuss federal funding of ocean and coastal science and management programs at our May 7 meeting. During the presentations, the Council learned about the large amount of federal funding supporting ocean science and management in our state to better understand the existing funding streams in place and educate the public about what is at risk.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife receives more than a quarter of its funding from federal sources, mostly from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, including continuing and competitive grants. This includes funding for commercial and recreational fisheries monitoring and management, stock assessments, habitat assessments, and harvest strategies for our state fisheries that are vital economic drivers for our coastal economies.

Oregon State University Hatfield Marine Science Center has already lost more than a dozen people and expects to lose another 10 to 15 people. The Center is facing program closures including entire labs. The federal government is proposing to eliminate Oregon Sea Grant, which is based at OSU with staff located at Hatfield and coastal Extension offices throughout Oregon. The National Science Foundation is facing cuts to half its funding including resources received by Oregon State University. The federal government is proposing to limit facilities and administration rates to 15 percent. This would equate to a reduction of \$40 million per year in funding cuts (representing 300 jobs) to Oregon State University alone including funds that support high speed computing, research libraries, janitorial and security services, and hazardous waste management.

The South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve manages around 7,000 acres of coastal area. Half of SSNERR's funds come from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, representing nearly \$1 million that supports 22 staff. SSNERR runs community and educational programming, hosting more than 125 classes annually and 1,400 students last year alone. Research conducted at the Reserve includes 30 years of water quality monitoring data and research into the invasive five spine European green crab, which holds the potential to decimate Dungeness crab and oyster habitat and populations vital to Oregon's coastal economies.

The Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems provides the public with vital data and information to solve problems and is wholly funded by the federal government through NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System. Information provided by NANOOS includes data that support safety at sea, shoreline protection, navigation and ports, seafood competitiveness, tsunami evacuation, and technological innovation. NANOOS funds coastal radars that track surface currents to increase the efficiency and accuracy of search and rescue operations as well as identify and guide safe routes for navigation. Their work supported the development of a tsunami mobile application in partnership with the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, modeling and real-time wave data at ports to aid bar pilots and mariners for safe passage, the sampling, analysis, and noticing for harmful algal blooms to protect public health, and the development of a recreational user mobile application to provide boaters, surfers, and beachgoers with real-time information to assess safe passage.

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development oversees our state's Coastal Management Program, a network of 41 cities and counties on the coast and 11 state agencies. Federal funding under Section 306 of the Coastal Zone Management Act covers salary for 11 of 16 staff under the Oregon Coastal Management Program at DLCD. These staff administer the goals and mission of the coastal management program to conserve and preserve the state's coastal resources while promoting resilient and vibrant coastal communities. Importantly, DLCD oversees the state's federal consistency determinations, one of the few avenues where the state can weigh in on federal actions affecting our coastal resources to ensure those actions are consistent with our enforceable policies that include statewide planning goals, statutes, rules, and local land use plans and ordinances.

Oregon Sea Grant is a cooperative program between OSU and NOAA, similar to university Land-Grant programs, that delivers integrated programs of locally relevant, ocean and coastal research, extension services, and education. ORSG programs focus on environmental literacy and workforce development, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, resilient communities and economies, and healthy coastal ecosystems. Two-thirds of ORSG's funding (\$3.5 million) is provided via NOAA under the National Sea Grant College Act. ORSG supports 40 staff positions, and over 60 student jobs each year, providing important technical capacity for Oregon's rural coastal zone. Its programs generate \$14 million in economic benefits for Oregon and serve almost 80,000 people every year, including youth, educators, fishermen, university students, local businesses and organizations, and the public.

NOAA funding that flows to our state is expected to be reduced by 50 percent. These impacts are severe and will hobble our state's leadership on science-based ocean and coastal management. This loss may also affect Oregon's regional ocean leadership that we share with Washington and California.

As evidenced by the summaries above, the threats to Oregon's marine natural resources, science and management are real. Because this is so important, OPAC excerpted this

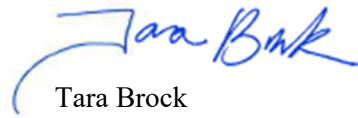
funding discussion segment from our meeting, which can be found on the Oregon DLCD YouTube site: https://youtu.be/gxuF0C15vDU?si=d9vf2BNSBp_yeT0D .

Given the current potential loss of federal funding sources and the resultant severe impacts to state management, it is incumbent on the State of Oregon to step up and better support our state agencies and scientific institutions. Robust funding for our state agencies with responsibilities for Oregon's Territorial Sea, advocacy to defend federal funding for state-wide ocean and coastal programs, and bills such as HB 3587 – the Rocky Habitat Stewardship bill and HB 3786 - the Oregon Ocean Science Trust Blue Economy bill are examples of ways that the State can provide support. OPAC stands ready to help and provide guidance as the state navigates the challenging times ahead.

Sincerely,



Susan Chambers
Chair



Tara Brock
Vice-Chair

Cc:

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