

December 23, 2011

Oregon International Port of Coos Bay
125 Central Avenue, Suite 300 - P.O. Box 1215
Coos Bay, OR 97420

RE: Marine Reserves

Dear President Kronsteiner and Port Commission Members:

Thank you for holding a special meeting to take public comment and to consider the Port's marine reserve committee recommendations. Over the past ten years there have been many productive and open conversations throughout the state about the economic and ecological importance of maintaining the long-term health of Oregon's coastal and ocean ecosystems. Oceana has been engaged in many of those conversations including at the legislature, meetings of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council, and coastal community teams like the Port's marine reserve committee. We are writing in support of the dissenting report authored by 11 members of the Port of Coos Bay marine reserve committee and to offer our perspective on a marine reserve and protected area in Oregon's ocean waters off the Cape Arago and Seven Devils area.

Scientific studies of marine reserves around the world, in tropical and in temperate ecosystems, have demonstrated that marine reserves, on average, increase the biomass of animals and plants by 466%, increase the density of marine life by 166%, the body size of individual animals by 26%, and the species diversity by 21% (PISCO 2007). Furthermore, bigger, older fish produce exponentially more young, which can populate and replenish areas beyond the boundaries of the reserves. Simply put, these are proven tools to protect and sustain abundant and healthy populations of marine life.

As stated in the dissenting report, a marine reserve in the Cape Arago – Seven Devils area will afford lasting protection of the diverse communities and habitats in this area. It will also function as an integral component of the state-wide system by linking the individual areas through larval and juvenile fish export and import. Importantly, a reserve in this area would be coupled with an active program of scientific research, monitoring, and evaluation.

From June 20-24, 2011, Oceana chartered the *R/V Miss Linda* out of Charleston and completed 17 dives with a Remotely Operated Vehicle off the southern Oregon coast between Cape Arago and Cape Blanco. With each dive lasting between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, we collected a massive amount of data captured in high definition video that will be useful for habitat

characterization and biological evaluation of these sites. Three of our dives were inside state waters on the Seven Devils reef just south of Cape Arago. We were surprised to find that this area is a highly complex rocky reef with many sensitive invertebrates like sponges and gorgonian corals, and a diversity of fish including overfished canary rockfish, overfished juvenile yelloweye rockfish, china rockfish, black rockfish and lingcod. This is certainly an important ecological area that deserves lasting protection by the State of Oregon. We encourage you to view a short video highlighting these three dives, available at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo-LPWqrasM&feature=youtu.be>

As stated in the dissenting report, we believe there must be a full unbiased evaluation of a marine reserve and protected area in the Cape Arago – Seven Devils planning area. From our experience with the coastal community team processes in the Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head and Cape Falcon areas, we learned of the importance of a full discussion and full inclusion of all available scientific and economic information pertaining to the areas being discussed. There is much important economic, social and ecological information that must be evaluated and considered and which was not brought forth in the Port marine reserve committee process. We are very concerned by the findings in the dissenting report that there was no unbiased ecological or socio-economic evaluation of the various marine reserve proposals. This means that the process had major shortcomings and a final determination by the Port is not warranted at this time.

Please give full consideration to the dissenting report and request that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife prepare a full ecological and socio-economic evaluation of the Cape Arago – Seven Devils planning area so that the Port and the State can make an informed decision on a marine reserve and protected area in this region.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Enticknap", written over a light blue rectangular background.

Ben Enticknap
Pacific Project Manager

Video of the Seven Devils reef: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo-LPWqrasM&feature=youtu.be>

Citation:

Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO). 2007. The Science of Marine Reserves (2nd Edition, United States Version). www.piscoweb.org. 22 pages.