November 2, 2026

Pew

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Governor of Oregon
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Re: Priority natural resource and resilience investments for the 2027–29 Governor's Recommended Budget

Dear Governor Kotek:

In June, The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) submitted the attached letter identifying targeted investments needed to strengthen Oregon's natural resources, coastal communities, and climate resilience. Now that agencies have completed their 2027–29 Agency Request Budgets (ARBs), Pew is encouraged that several of the priorities identified in our earlier letter are reflected in agency proposals. We respectfully recommend that the following investments be included in your 2027–29 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) to support coastal resilience planning, habitat conservation and connectivity, water quality, and resilient management of Oregon's lands and waters. These investments will also help advance the objectives set forth in Executive Order 25-26.

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

Pew recommends incorporating the following proposals from Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development's (DLCD) "Future Investment Opportunities" section of its ARB[1] into the GRB.

- *Grants for Local Governments for Coastal Resiliency: $1.84m*

While Pew supports DLCD's $1.84 million coastal grant proposal as a foundation, the documented need is greater than this investment.[2] Coastal cities, counties, and Tribes face increasing floods, erosion, and infrastructure impacts. Many of these communities use hand-drawn maps and decades-old land use plans to make decisions. Additionally, coastal planners must implement Oregon's specialized coastal land use planning requirements (Statewide Land Use Goals 16-18)[3] without dedicated support. Outdated

[1] Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Agency Requested Budget 2027-29, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/About/Documents/DLCD%202027-29%20Agency%20Request%20Budget.pdf
[2] The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Oregon Coastal Communities Seek Solutions Amid Worsening Storms, Sea-Level Rise," January 26, 2026, https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2026/01/27/oregon-coastal-communities-seek-solutions-amid-worsening-storms-sea-level-rise
[3] Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon's Statewide Land Use Planning Goals, Goals 16-18, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/op/pages/goals.aspx

land use plans create uncertainty for housing, infrastructure, habitat restoration, and economic development projects, all while inhibiting social and ecological resilience

Accordingly, Pew is working with partners on complementary legislation[4] in 2027 that would provide $4 million for a dedicated Coastal Resilience Planning Fund to cities, counties, and Tribes, establish new cost-share options for local planners, and clarify state agency technical assistance roles to support coastal governments with planning. The agency request and proposed legislation are complementary efforts to establish a durable state commitment to coastal planning. Investment in coastal land use planning is also aligned with specific recommendations in the Plan for a Resilient Oregon[5] and the Offshore Wind Roadmap.[6]

Pew also recommends inclusion of:

- *Updating Oregon's Hazards and Nature-based Inventories to Support Buildable Land: $2.47m and 1 FTE;*
- *Increasing Wetlands Technical Assistance Program: $1.1m; and*
- *Estuary Resilience Plans and Tidal Estuary Conservation: $354,000*.

Taken together, these investments respond directly to the needs identified in our June letter and in DLCD's Executive Order 25-26 workplan.[7] They are particularly urgent and timely because the Oregon Coastal Management Program continues to operate with constrained federal funding while coastal cities, counties, and Tribal Nations face growing planning demands and coastal hazards.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Pew recommends including the following Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Policy Option Packages (POP):[8]

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[4] See resources related to LC 1628, the Oregon Coastal Resilience Planning and Partnerships Act, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19tHkQ1tgNWEHnWZJDCyhOkd63CaRAhtL?usp=drive_link

[5] See Actions 2.5, 2.9, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, and 5.7 in Office of Governor Tina Kotek. 2026. Plan for a Resilient Oregon. https://doi.org/10.5399/osu/1208

[6] See page 17, item 4 under "Economic Participation in Offshore Wind Energy Supply Chains and Research" and page 170, recommended action 6.3.3.2 in Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Offshore Wind Energy Roadmap, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/OCMP/Documents/OR-OSW-Roadmap_FINAL.pdf

[7] Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Executive Order 25-26 Climate and Resiliency Work Plan, October 8, 2026, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Commission/Documents/2026-10_Item%206_EO%2025-26_Combinedpdf.pdf

[8] Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Agency Requested Budget 2027-29, https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/budget/docs/27-29/63500%20Oregon%20Department%20of%20Fish%20and%20Wildlife%202027-29%20Agency%20Request%20Budget.pdf

- *POP 101, Recovering Oregon's Wildlife: $57.05 million and 81.50 FTE;*
- *POP 102, Wildlife Stewardship: $1.41 million and 4.00 FTE;*
- *POP 103, Wildlife Connectivity: $3.40 million;*
- *POP 104, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund: $3.40 million; and*
- *POP 105, Recreational Shellfish Surveys/Public Outreach: $891,808 and 3.00 FTE*.

These packages closely align with the recommendations in Pew's June letter. They would support implementation of Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan, partnerships with landowners and Tribes, habitat connectivity, and conservation grants. Together, POPs 101 through 104 represent a particularly significant opportunity to advance Executive Order 25-26 through measurable investments in species recovery, natural and working lands stewardship, and connected habitats. POP 105 would strengthen Oregon's capacity to collect estuarine data that can inform habitat management and local estuary management plan updates.

Oregon Department of State Lands

Pew recommends including the following Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) POPs:[9]

- *POP 112, the Modern Permitting System Project;*
- *POP 108, South Slough Seasonal Educator to Full Time; and*
- *POP 109, South Slough Project Management Position*.

POP 112, the Modern Permitting System Project, will improve timeliness, transparency, and administration of removal-fill permits, wetland delineation reviews, and related aquatic resource services. This investment should be accompanied by adequate staffing and operating resources for the Aquatic Resource Management Program. Technology modernization alone will not fully address growing permitting demands or the need to maintain strong protection of Oregon's wetlands and waterways.

POPs 108 and 109 would strengthen state capacity at the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, which provides long-term estuary monitoring, applied research, education, technical assistance, and support for coastal partners. Maintaining this capacity is increasingly important given continued uncertainty surrounding federal support for the national reserve system.

[9] Oregon Department of State Lands, Agency Requested Budget 2027-29, https://www.oregon.gov/dsl/Documents/Department%20of%20State%20Lands%202027-29%20Agency%20Request%20Budget.pdf

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Pew recommends maintaining sufficient resources within the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Water Quality Standards Program to continue designating and protecting Outstanding Resource Waters. These designations provide durable protection for Oregon's highest-quality waters and can help advance the land and water conservation objectives of Executive Order 25-26.

Pew also encourages consideration of DEQ's identified need for additional Clean Watershed Restoration Planning and Implementation capacity. This investment would strengthen development and implementation of clean water plans, improve restoration prioritization, and assist state, local, and Tribal partners responsible for watershed restoration.

Oregon Department of Transportation

Pew remains concerned that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) did not incorporate any POPs to secure additional funding for activities to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. Pew continues to recommend dedicated funding for the ODOT's Wildlife Crossing Program. Oregon experiences thousands of wildlife-vehicle collisions each year, yet the state lacks a consistent source of funding for crossings, fencing, and related mitigation.

Pew's June letter identified $5 million annually as an appropriate level of investment to both accelerate planning and construction at priority locations identified by ODOT and ODFW, as well as serve as a match for federal wildlife crossing grants programs. Although a dedicated wildlife crossing investment does not appear to be addressed adequately in ODOT's ARB [10],[11] it remains an important opportunity to improve public safety, reduce collision costs, and maintain connected landscapes as environmental conditions change.

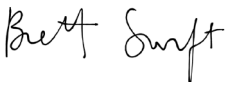
Thank you for considering these recommendations as you develop the 2027–29 Governor's Recommended Budget. The agencies' requests validate many of the needs identified in Pew's June letter. Carrying these proposals forward, while addressing the remaining coastal planning, freshwater protection, aquatic permitting, and wildlife connectivity gaps, would provide an actionable foundation for implementing Executive Order 25-26.

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[11] Oregon Department of Transportation, Agency Requested Budget 2027-29, https://www.oregon.gov/odot/About/Budget/Combined%2027-29%20ARB%20ALL.pdf

Thank you for considering our input. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these priorities with you and your staff. Please do not hesitate to contact me at bswift@pewtrusts.org or 971-344-5510 if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Brett Swift
Project Director, U.S. Conservation
The Pew Charitable Trusts

cc:
Geoff Huntington, Senior Natural Resources Advisor, Office of Governor Kotek
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Kelly Brooks, Transportation, Infrastructure and Economic Development Advisor, Office of Governor Kotek
Dr. Debbie Colbert, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kaitlin Lovell, Director, Oregon Department of State Lands
Dr. Brenda Bateman, Director, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Leah Feldon, Director, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Chris Warner, Interim Director, Oregon Department of Transportation

Pew

June 12, 2026

Oregon Governor Kotek
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Kotek:

Thank you for your continued leadership in guiding Oregon's budget decisions during a challenging fiscal environment. We deeply appreciate your long-standing commitment to protecting the state's natural resources, strengthening community resilience, and ensuring responsible stewardship of public funds.

The Pew Charitable Trusts' (Pew) U.S. Conservation program advances commonsense solutions that address the impacts of a changing environment on nature and communities, in collaboration with policymakers, Tribes, and stakeholders. In Oregon, we work to advance the following goals: landscape climate resilience and adaptation, estuary management and coastal resilience, freshwater protection, and terrestrial wildlife connectivity.

Priority Programs

Pew has reviewed agency budget requests and has identified several programs critical to support Oregon's ability to protect, restore, and manage the state's abundant natural resources. These programs are also essential to advance your Executive Order (EO) 25-26[1] and increase land and water resilience. We urge support and funding for the following programs for the 2027-2029 budget, with each section including both a high-level summary as well as more detailed analysis below:

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

[1] State of Oregon, Governor Tina Kotek, Executive Order No. 25-26, October 2025, https://www.oregon.gov/gov/eo/eo-25-26.pdf

- Maintain current service levels for the Ocean and Coastal Division, particularly its Oregon Coastal Management Program, the Community Services Division, and the Planning Services Division.
- Increase investment in the Oregon Coastal Management Program with at least one additional FTE to bolster staff capacity for collaboration with coastal cities, counties, and Tribes, for proactive land-use planning to address growing social and environmental challenges threatening coastal communities.
- Ensure or provide that there is dedicated coastal resilience planning and project funding opportunities for coastal counties, cities, and Tribal Nations. This investment will help achieve key aspects of EO 25-26, including projects that may contribute to the '10x10' goal and implementation of the Plan for a Resilient Oregon. We welcome the opportunity to connect and share ideas on these needs.

The Department of Land Conservation and Development's (DLCD) Ocean and Coastal Division provides essential services to coastal communities through its Oregon Coastal Management Program (OCMP) and Regional Representatives. This Division's long-term capacity is a concern for both Pew and many coastal city and county planners.[2] OCMP implements the Statewide Land Use Planning Program for the coastal zone and stewards the Territorial Sea Plan. Reliant on dwindling National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funding,[3,4] this program is under-resourced yet is instrumental in advancing EO 25-26 and building resilience on the coast because it provides technical support to cities and counties to help them manage their invaluable coastal resources and adapt to changing conditions. Importantly, the OCMP is leading an effort to help coastal cities and counties update their estuary and coastal shorelands plans pursuant to Goals 16 and 17 of the State Land Use Planning System[5,6] which have not been comprehensively amended for decades. Funding for this program will ensure that staff can fulfill this

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[2] The Pew Charitable Trusts, Oregon Coastal Communities Seek Solutions Amid Worsening Storms, Sea-Level Rise, 1/27/26, https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2026/01/27/oregon-coastal-communities-seek-solutions-amid-worsening-storms-sea-level-rise

[3] Coastal States Organization, Trump Administration Proposes Elimination of Coastal Management Grants, article posted April 22, 2026, https://coastalstates.org/trump-administration-proposes-elimination-of-coastal-management-programs/

[4] U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Budget Estimate: Fiscal Year 2027 / Congressional Justification, April 2026, https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/FY2027-NOAA-CJ-Submission.pdf

[5] State of Oregon, Oregon Statewide Land Use Goals, Goal 16: Estuarine Resources, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/OP/Pages/Goal-16.aspx

[6] State of Oregon, Oregon Statewide Land Use Goals, Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/op/pages/goal-17.aspx

objective and help coastal communities plan for sea level rise and build resilience to increased flooding and storms.

OCMP also operates under a legacy funding restriction resulting from actions by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and not due to the DLCD. In its 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget Detailed Analysis from April 2026, the Legislative Fiscal Office summarizes this dynamic:

> *DLCD also faces an ongoing reduction to funding for the agency's coastal program due to [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] NOAA and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency disapproval of Oregon's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program. During the 2013-15 biennium, it was determined that Oregon was not managing forests in a way that would adequately protect salmon habitats in streams or address runoff and landslide risks due to past logging activities. This resulted in a 30% reduction in funding provided for coastal zone management activities under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 and subsequent reauthorizations; this amount is equivalent to approximately $1.6 million each biennium. The Oregon Department of Forestry, not DLCD, has regulatory authority for forest practices; DLCD is hopeful that recent changes to the Forest Practices Act will result in the possible restoration of funding within the next two years. While DLCD has been able to backfill some funding for this program, reductions to the coastal program may be necessary if coastal program funding does not increase above current levels during future funding cycles.* [7]

DLCD's Community Services Division provides essential services that support implementation of the State Land Use Planning system and goals at the local level, including technical assistance and grants. Local governments need these resources to update their comprehensive plans and proactively plan for climate impacts. For example, these services play a key role in supporting coastal communities in their efforts to update their estuary management plans and build resilience to sea level rise and coastal hazards.

DLCD's Planning Services Division plays an invaluable role in planning for new and upcoming changes to Oregon's landscapes, infrastructure, and communities. The Division provides novel resources to help local governments understand risks and plan adaptation actions accordingly. In particular, the Division helps build resilience to natural hazards and disasters by managing and supporting local mitigation planning. The Natural Hazard Mitigation Program helps cities, counties, tribes, and special districts with incorporating

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[7] Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office, 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget Detailed Analysis, April 2026, page 545 (PDF page 549), https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/Documents/2025-27%20Legislatively%20Adopted%20Budget%20Detailed%20Analysis.pdf

natural hazards data into land use plans and regulations and advancing local and state resilience and post-disaster recovery planning.[8] Of particular importance to Pew is to build climate-ready estuaries on Oregon's coast, and the planning services division plays an invaluable role in helping communities understand the risks associated with climate change in their region and develop mitigation strategies to address these risks.

In addition to the continuing service level required for the Ocean and Coastal Division and its Oregon Coastal Management Program, Community Services Division, and Planning Services Division, Pew recommends further investment in OCMP programmatic work and staff, including an additional FTE to address growing social and environmental challenges threatening coastal communities. Such an investment would be a substantial help to coastal communities while bolstering the goals of the Governor's EO 25-26. We welcome the opportunity to share insights on this in the near future to inform the 2027 legislative session.

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

- Maintain current service levels for:
    - The Wildlife Division, including the Conservation Program and Strategy, Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management, Habitat Resources, and Wildlife Habitat Programs.
    - The Habitat Division, including the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund and its Water, Land Resources, Regional Habitat, and Natural and Working Lands Program.
    - The Fish Division, including the Marine Resources Program.
- Support Policy Option Packages related to species resiliency and HB 4134 implementation and incorporate in the Governor's Recommended Budget, including:
    - $1.2M for Wildlife Stewardship
    - $3.1M for Wildlife Connectivity
    - $3.1M for Oregon's Conservation and Recreation Fund
    - $55.7M for Recovering Oregon's Wildlife
    - $824K for Shellfish Population Surveys

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) administers several programs that are central to protecting wildlife connectivity, climate resilience, and key habitats across the

[8] Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Natural Hazards Program, access 5/1/26, https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/nh/pages/index.aspx

state. Through its Wildlife Conservation Program and Conservation Strategy, ODFW leads implementation of the 2026 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP),[9] which identifies wildlife connectivity, cold-water refugia, and estuary management as priority conservation needs.

The SWAP recognizes habitat connectivity as a key conservation issue, calling for coordinated action to reduce wildlife mortality on roadways and maintain the connected landscapes species need to meet daily, seasonal, and life-cycle needs—especially as climate conditions change. ODFW has advanced this work through the Oregon Wildlife Corridor Action Plan, developed with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project (OCAMP),[10] completed with Portland State University and Samara Group. OCAMP identified Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas that form a statewide network of landscapes most critical for wildlife movement. Continued investment in these efforts ensures strong coordination between ODFW and ODOT to address wildlife-vehicle collision (WVCs) hotspots while advancing long-term connectivity goals that Pew has supported for several years.

The SWAP also highlights the importance of identifying and protecting cold-water refugia through statewide temperature modeling and data collection. This information underpins cross-agency efforts to safeguard Oregon's most ecologically significant waterways, including through tools such as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs)designations led by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ).[11] ODFW's data and expertise are essential to protecting sensitive fish habitat and strengthening the resilience of freshwater systems to climate change—an area where Pew has long partnered with state agencies.

Finally, the SWAP identifies estuaries as a strategic habitat and notes that outdated estuary management plans remain a barrier to effective conservation. ODFW's Conservation Program, Habitat Division, and Fish Division play complementary roles in addressing this challenge. Programs such as Natural and Working Lands and the Marine Resources Program support estuary restoration, climate-resilient habitat management, permitting, and the state's only comprehensive estuary mapping and monitoring effort (housed within the Shellfish Program). Together, these programs provide the science, data, and technical

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[9] Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan. 2026. Salem, Oregon, accessed 5/1/26, https://swap.oregon.gov/overview/

[10] Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project (OCAMP), accessed 5/1/26, https://swap.oregon.gov/success-story/the-oregon-connectivity-assessment-and-mapping-project-ocamp/

[11] Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Antidegradation and Outstanding Resource Waters, accessed 5/1/26, https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/pages/wq-standards-policies.aspx

assistance needed to integrate estuary health into land use planning and support sound management of Oregon's coastal ecosystems.

To help advance SWAP implementation, Pew recommends the Governor's Budget incorporate ODFW's Policy Option Packages (POPs) related to species resiliency and the implementation of HB 4134, including the proposed $1.2M for Wildlife Stewardship, $3.1M for Wildlife Connectivity, $3.1M for Oregon's Conservation and Recreation Fund, and $55.7M for Recovering Oregon's Wildlife. Additionally, we ask that you support ODFW's $824 K POP for Shellfish Population Surveys, as this investment will increase capacity for the agency to expand estuarine habitat mapping and improve data integration in local estuary management plan updates. This mapping information is also essential to establish resilient habitat baselines, in service of EO 25-26 implementation. These investments in SWAP implementation, wildlife stewardship, estuary mapping, and habitat connectivity are necessary to meaningfully advance connectivity and climate-ready management. These POPs also align with EO 25-26 and your call for coordinated, science-based action that improves ecological function, reduces future risk, and sustains fish and wildlife across working and natural landscapes.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

- Maintain current service levels for the Water Quality Standards Program, particularly with regard to classifying waters as Outstanding Resource Waters.

Pew has collaborated for several years with the ODEQ to secure the protection of and prevent future degradation to Oregon's waters through ORW designations, a high-level water quality protection under the Clean Water Act.[12] This work of ODEQ's Water Quality Standards Program ensures that key freshwater resources are protected and significantly more resilient to climate impacts. ORW protections also contribute to the goal of increasing land and water protections by ten percent in ten years ('10x10'), pursuant to EO 25-26. In February 2026, the agency began rulemaking to adopt ORW designations for two waterbodies in the Rogue Basin – Illinois River and Rough and Ready Creek. Funding for this program should support both the ongoing designation of freshwater systems in response to nominations submitted to the agency and the development of a comprehensive statewide program designed to systematically protect critical freshwater systems.

[12] Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Antidegradation and Outstanding Resource Waters, accessed 5/1/26, https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/pages/wq-standards-policies.aspx

Oregon Department of Transportation

- Maintain current service levels for the Wildlife Crossing Program.
- Provide additional investments in the Wildlife Crossing Program to advance the planning and construction of wildlife crossings in areas identified as priorities by the Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. We welcome the opportunity to connect and share ideas on these needs.

ODOT's Wildlife Crossings Program works to reduce WVCs by building appropriate crossing infrastructure. Wildlife corridors and crossings serve two main purposes: (1) to provide safe passage for animals forced to navigate ecosystems fragmented by roads, and (2) to reduce the chances of WVCs. The WVC reduction effort strategically invests in wildlife crossings, fencing, and other mitigation efforts, which have proven time and again to dramatically reduce collisions by roughly 90 percent where implemented.[13] Ongoing work of this program and the resulting reductions in collisions directly address preventable harms—helping to save lives, protect wildlife, and reduce fiscal strain on public resources.

ODOT's Transportation Funding Needs Report (2024),[14] notes that each year, there are over 7,000 WVCs in Oregon; on average, four people die and 521 people are seriously injured in those collisions. However, there is no dedicated state funding source to reduce WVCs, despite a 2019 state law meant to reduce these types of collisions (HB 2834). An investment of $5 million per year would enable the construction of an additional 20 wildlife fencing and structure projects over the next 30 years. Pew supports additional funding to meet these needs and welcomes the opportunity to share insights on this in the near future to inform the 2027 legislative session.

Oregon Department of State Lands

- Maintain current service level funding for the Aquatic Resource Management Program, including its Submerged Lands, In-Lieu Fee Mitigation, and Wetland Delineation Programs.
- Seek additional investment in the Removal-Fill Permitting Program to ensure the agency can keep pace with increasing permitting demands. If the National Estuarine

[13] Scioto Analysis, "Wildlife Crossings: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," 2025, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdb6f642714e55b84ebe507/t/67cef4c8a38e7808b71dc3ee/1741616329319/Wildlife+Crossings+CBA.pdf.
[14] Oregon Department of Transportation, Transportation Fundings Needs, July 2024.

Research Reserve System (NERRS) reduces funding support for the South Slough Reserve in 2026 budget, ensure state investment to sustain the program.

The Oregon Department of State Lands' (DSL) Aquatic Resource Management program[15] is essential to the health of Oregon's waterways and wetlands, including the state's estuaries and tidal wetlands. This program implements removal-fill permitting, provides technical assistance to local governments and property owners, enforces mitigation measures, manages Oregon-owned submerged lands, and funds restoration through the Submerged Lands Enhancement Fund. Collectively, these program services contribute to resilient waters and landscapes while supporting responsible uses of our invaluable aquatic resources.

DSL's removal-fill permitting program is paramount to ensuring Oregon's wetlands and waters are protected from degradation, particularly as federal jurisdiction to manage aquatic alterations continues to narrow in scope following the Supreme Court's *Sackett v. EPA* (2023) decision. Successful mitigation outcomes and permitting efficiency depend on the program being well-staffed and resourced to handle the growing influx of permit applications. Pew recommends the state bolster DSL's permitting program to be proactive about these changing demands.

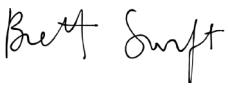
In addition, Pew is a long-time supporter of the NERR system including South Slough Reserve in Coos Bay, Oregon, which is the first national estuarine research reserve in the nation. Managed through DSL, the South Slough Reserve provides invaluable long-term monitoring data on estuarine environmental conditions, which helps coastal managers understand changes observed in all of Oregon's estuaries. The Reserve also conducts novel research on restoration techniques, necessary to inform wetland restoration projects elsewhere on the coast. The program also provides technical assistance, community outreach and education, and convenes partners on projects related to the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan update. Half of the South Slough Reserve is federally funded and currently vulnerable to federal budget cuts. The state must preserve the integrity of the program by maintaining state funding, and where possible, increasing capacity to protect staff and services.

[15] Oregon Department of State Lands, Aquatic Resources Management Program, accessed 5/1/26, https://www.oregon.gov/dsl/wetlands-waters/pages/default.aspx

Pew urges you to prioritize the programs noted above, all of which advance climate resilience, support coastal community planning, maintain healthy connected waters, and improve safety for Oregonians and wildlife on the state's roads.

Thank you for your consideration of Pew's comments. We welcome the opportunity to share insights on these programs to inform the 2027 legislative session. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at bswift@pewtrusts.org, or 971.344.5510, should I be able to provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Brett Swift
Project Director, U.S. Conservation
The Pew Charitable Trusts

cc:
Geoff Huntington, Senior Natural Resources Advisor, Office of Governor Kotek
Chandra Ferrari, Natural Resources Advisor, Office of Governor Kotek
Kelly Brooks, Transportation, Infrastructure and Economic Development Advisor, Office of Governor Kotek