

From: [Kavanaugh, Maria Teresa](#)
To: [ODFW Commission * ODFW](#)
Subject: ODFW HAB Monitoring
Date: Monday, June 10, 2024 11:49:53 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you please consider and put forward to the Governor's office, the policy option package (POP #111) for the ODFW HAB monitoring proposed project. My name is Maria Kavanaugh. I am a researcher and Assistant Professor at Oregon State University. Our group focuses on the tiny organisms that fuel the ocean food web, phytoplankton. We utilize satellite images, bio-optical instrumentation, and numerical analyses to track distributions and changes in phytoplankton and how these changes affect fisheries, food quality, and food safety, including the patterns and trends of toxic or otherwise harmful algal blooms.

The importance of the harmful algal bloom (HAB) monitoring has been clearly illustrated by the recent illnesses of over 20 people and hospitalization of several Oregon residents who became ill from contaminated shellfish. These people were suffering from paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), a toxin produced by marine plankton and concentrated into the flesh of shellfish through filter feeding. With HAB monitoring, an early warning of the presence of these harmful plankton can be provided to state health authorities.

The ODFW HAB monitoring is strategically and critically important to protect human health in the State of Oregon. The HAB Program (POP #111) will provide this consistent protection to avert the threat of HABs. Below are more details about the illness event:

On May 27, 2024, Oregon health officials warned anyone who gathered mussels from certain beaches on the northern Oregon coast to throw them out after reports of people sickened by a shellfish-borne biotoxin. At least 20 people fell ill after eating mussels gathered over the weekend at Short Beach near Oceanside in Tillamook County and at Hug Point near Seaside in Clatsop County, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). An unknown number of people were hospitalized, but the OHA said there have been no reported deaths.

The patients reported symptoms of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), which can cause numbness of the mouth and lips, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and in severe cases shortness of breath or irregular heartbeat. Phytoplankton monitoring through the Olympic Region Harmful Algal Bloom (ORHAB) partnership, has indicated that *Alexandrium* (the causative agent for PSP) numbers are elevated in WA, and sporadic phytoplankton monitoring by University of Oregon and Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) have shown that these cells are also still present in OR as of 4 June 2024.

Thank you for your advocacy for POP #111, ODFW HAB monitoring proposal.

Sincerely,

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Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR is located within the traditional homelands of the Mary's River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855, Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today, living descendants of these people are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.