

# Seattle Aquarium Urban Kelp Research Project

Five (5) Year Service Agreement & Commission  
Exemption, April 28, 2026

# Request

1. Authorization for the Executive Director to sign a 5-year, \$325,000 service agreement with the Seattle Aquarium to continue research on urban kelp.
2. Staff is also requesting that the Commission exempt the service agreement from competitive process requirements consistent with RCW 53.19.020(5)

# Context

- In April 2022, the Commission approved initial funding for the project (\$120,000) for the first 2 years.
- The contract was subsequently amended to extend the duration and add budget to continue the research.
- The current request would support an additional 5 years of data collection and site surveys, on-going refinement of the methodology, and support development of a habitat suitability model for future kelp restoration efforts.

# Urban Kelp Research Project

## Objective:

Understand the conditions that foster healthy kelp beds along Elliott Bay shorelines.

## Port of Seattle and Seattle Aquarium Collaborate to Restore Kelp Forests in Elliott Bay

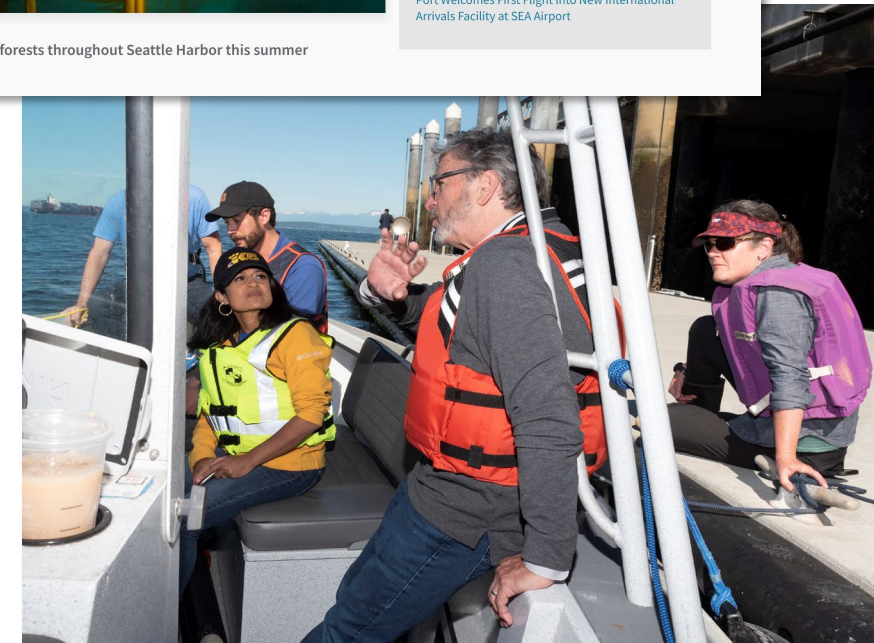


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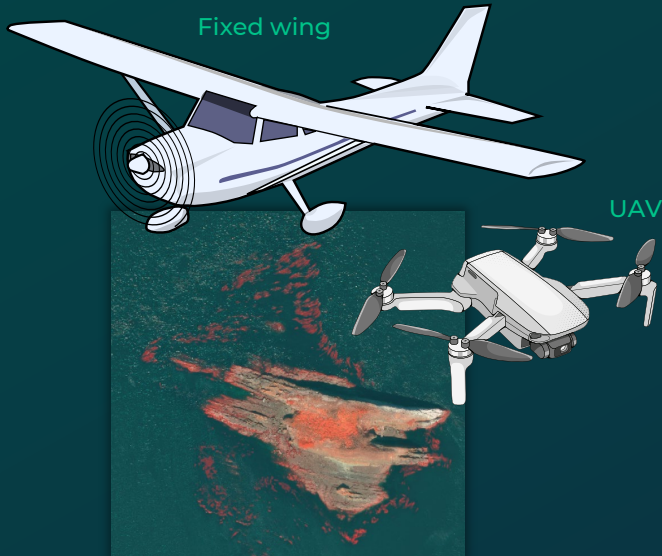
Project will study and map urban kelp forests throughout Seattle Harbor this summer

April 26, 2022

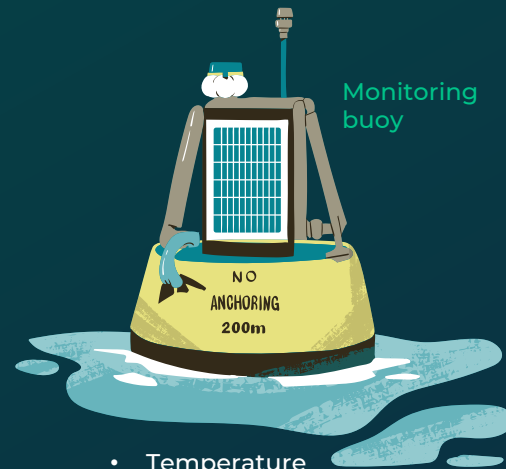


# Ripple effects of Port-supported research

WA Dept. of Natural Resources

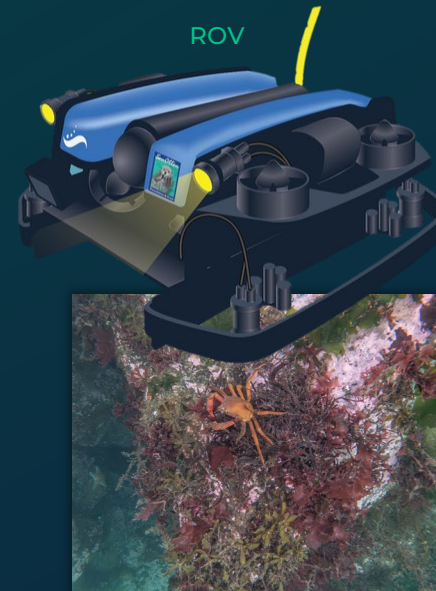


Puget Sound Research Fund

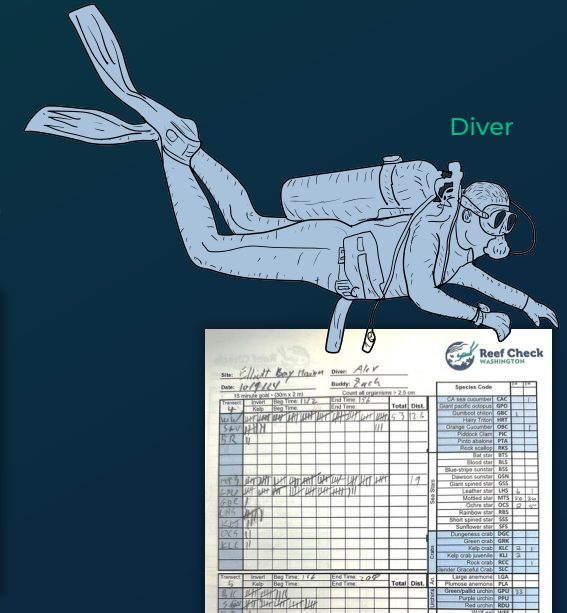


- Temperature
- Conductivity
- Dissolved oxygen
- pH
- Photosynthetically active radiation (PAR)

Seattle Aquarium



Reef Check





# Commission Exemption

Competing this service is not reasonable or cost effective due to the following:

- Seattle Aquarium provides a unique combination of services including development and implementation of a bull kelp monitoring program in Elliott Bay utilizing underwater ROVs; training and validating AI models; development of a habitat suitability model; and extensive outreach and engagement opportunities.
- The research and engagement program is aligned with Port of Seattle goals as well as statewide and regional kelp initiatives.

# Request

1. Authorization for the Executive Director to sign a 5-year, \$325,000 service agreement with the Seattle Aquarium Society to continue research on urban kelp.
2. Staff is also requesting that the Commission exempt the service agreement from competitive process requirements consistent with RCW 53.19.020(5)