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Thursday, June 6, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Kropf, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share public testimony. My name is Ashley Audycki, and I am the South Coast Regional Coordinator with Rogue Climate, a community organization based in Coos Bay and the Rogue Valley and I live in Coos Bay.

Although legislators have reduced the scope of the proposed bill to focus on exemptions for Ports and federally recognized Tribes in Coos Bay, the potential impacts of HB 3382 - A11 continue to be untenable for South Coast community members.

Legislators who aren't from the South Coast have described Coos Bay as a downtrodden place that will only be revived by giving out-of-state corporations a short-cut around the longstanding systems that protect and balance the uses of the Coos Bay Estuary. This is an age-old story – that our community needs big industrial development to come in from elsewhere to save us, and that the only way to create enough jobs is to erode the safeguards that protect our land and water. But, Coos County community members know that's not the case.

I would like to paint a different picture. Coos Bay is a growing community held up by small businesses, a growing tourism industry, an emerging arts, culture and local food scene, and surrounded by a beautiful bay and coastline. The estuary that feeds generations of commercial fishing and shellfishing industries is thriving and continues to recover after decades of industrialization. Indigenous communities are still stewards of the bay and are restoring first languages - Miluk and Hanis Coos. Coos Bay is not a sad place - it is our home.

Our community has a vision for thriving Coos Bay where people have access to affordable and abundant housing, and robust trade-school onramps for family wage jobs in industries that work in balance with a thriving, healthy estuary. Where young people stay in the community, and folks want to come back. Where our economy is thriving because of industries that benefit the community, such as healthcare, regenerative ocean farming, energy efficiency, and the arts.

HB 3382-A11 is bad for generations of local businesses. The Coos Bay Estuary is the backbone of our local economy. Generations-long industries rely on a healthy bay, including shellfish production, commercial fishing, recreation, and tourism—all of which would be threatened if the Port of Coos Bay were allowed to bypass land use laws.

HB 3382-A11 continues to be at odds with Oregon's climate goals. We are pleased to see the -A11 amendment would not allow exemptions for the commercial processing, importing or exporting of fossil fuels. However, the degree of rock blasting and dredging that this bill makes way for could cause irreparable damage to the Coos Bay



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Estuary, one of the largest natural climate solutions in Oregon. The estuary provides protection from climate impacts by mitigating ocean acidification and protecting local infrastructure from floods. This ecosystem is the nursery for the fisheries on the South Coast, and home to essential species like eel grass which sequester carbon 10x more efficiently than forests.

Local cities and stakeholders are updating the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan for the first time in 40 years. This is a robust public process to lay out a community vision and management plan for the estuary and the industries that depend on it. A comprehensive update to this plan is needed to ensure that communities surrounding the bay can adapt to climate change—and until the update is complete, we urge legislators to pause on HB 3382.

Lastly, this bill sets a dangerous precedent. Goal 16 requires that water-dependent industries demonstrate whether their project is needed, has public benefit, and that it will not interfere with public trust rights. HB 3382-A11 would undermine the integrity of our 50 year old land use system to fast-track a single project: the Pacific Intermodal Container Terminal project at the Port of Coos Bay.

Former legislator Brian Clem has been a vocal proponent of the bill and is also a private partner at North Point development, which stands to profit from the development of this project. There's something fishy with Oregon's democracy when corporate insiders and former elected officials are able to legislate short-cuts for their pet projects.

The vast majority of the opposition for this bill comes from the local community who would be most impacted, including city council members who have not been consulted about this policy. . More than 240 community members across Oregon submitted comments in opposition to HB 3382-A11, held lobby meetings with legislators, and sent letters.

We urge you to stand with South Coast community members. Vote no on HB 3382-A11.

Sincerely,

Ashley Audycki
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