Submitter:	Sarah Hanneken
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB2965

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HB 2965-5 and urge you to pass this bill out of committee.

Industrial aquaculture poses significant risks to Oregon's coastal waters through pollution, habitat degradation, and disease transmission. Waste from these operations—excess feed, fish excrement, and chemical treatments—accumulates in surrounding waters, depleting oxygen and fueling harmful algal blooms. Farmed fish are also highly susceptible to disease outbreaks, such as infectious hematopoietic necrosis (IHN) and sea lice infestations, which have spread from aquaculture facilities along the Pacific Coast and threaten wild fish populations. Oregon's coastal waters support vibrant marine life and sustainable fisheries that Indigenous communities, commercial fishers, and local economies depend on. Allowing industrial-scale aquaculture to establish itself in this environment would jeopardize these communities and the health of our coastal ecosystems. By passing this legislation, Oregon can take a proactive approach to protecting its ocean waters, prioritizing environmental sustainability over the well-documented risks of industrial aquaculture.

And these risks aren't hypothetical. Large-scale marine and estuarine aquaculture has repeatedly caused ecological harm, particularly in fragile coastal ecosystems. We need only look to our neighbors in Washington, where the 2017 collapse of a commercial Atlantic salmon net-pen at Cooke Aquaculture's Cypress Island facility released over 260,000 non-native fish into Puget Sound. This disaster posed a direct threat to wild salmon populations, ultimately leading Washington to ban open-net pen farming of non-native fish in state waters. Oregon has the opportunity to take action before a similar catastrophe occurs in our own waters, ensuring that our marine ecosystems remain healthy and resilient.

The good news is that this bill would not disrupt any established Oregon operations. Oregon's current marine aquaculture sector primarily consists of shellfish and seaweed farms, which aren't impacted by HB 2965-5. These operations focus on species such as Pacific oysters and dulse seaweed, utilizing non-marine environments and land-based tank systems rather than open coastal waters. Because HB 2965-5 specifically targets industrial-scale fin fish operations in coastal waters, our state's shellfish and seaweed farms would be unaffected. (I was

astounded to hear corporate lobbyists during the Feb. 26 public hearing make patently false claims about the impact of this bill on their businesses. They grossly misrepresented the bill's scope.)

Ten years ago, I chose to move to Oregon because this state isn't afraid to do the right thing—for the environment, for animals, and for communities. I frequently visit the Oregon coast and nearby estuaries to enjoy the beautiful clear waters and rich marine life. If industrial aquaculture operations are allowed to set up massive facilities, we WILL eventually see the same ecological disasters that have plagued our Pacific Coast neighbors. The 2018 harmful algal bloom in British Columbia is yet another example of what could happen. Such disasters wouldn't just harm local communities and wildlife—they would also devastate Oregonians like myself, who cherish the coast for recreation, tourism, and its intrinsic natural beauty. Washington, British Columbia, and other Pacific coast regions serve as cautionary tales, emphasizing the need for proactive measures to prevent similar harm here in Oregon.

Please support HB 2965-5 and take action before an ecological disaster occurs—while we still have the chance to prevent it. This bill imposes little to no cost on existing businesses, yet it offers an enormous safeguard for our marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and the future of Oregon's coastal waters. Thank you for your time and consideration.