

Submitter: Hugh Cole

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2965

Hugh K. Cole, Jr.  
329 Brookside Drive  
Eugene, OR 97405

House Agriculture Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
RE: Strong Opposition to HB 2965

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2965, which seeks to prohibit net-pen aquaculture in Oregon. This bill represents a step backward for our state's environmental leadership. Local aquaculture is a sustainable and necessary industry that plays a critical role in reducing pressure on wild fish stocks, decreasing our reliance on seafood imports, and mitigating carbon emissions associated with overseas imports.

Currently, the United States imports nearly 80% of its seafood, a practice that carries a significant carbon footprint. Foreign production practices often fail to meet the rigorous environmental standards we Oregon consumers value.

Well-managed net-pen operations provide an essential alternative to wild-caught fish, alleviating pressure on native salmon and steelhead populations, many of which are already struggling due to habitat loss, climate change, and overfishing.

The narrative that net-pen aquaculture is an environmental risk is outdated and does not reflect the

advancements in modern farming techniques. Many of the concerns voiced about net-pen aquaculture stem from past practices that have since been addressed through science-based approaches to regulation and innovation.

Oregon has a long history of making sound environmental decisions, balancing conservation with responsible resource use. Passing an anti-farming law like HB 2965 sends the wrong message—not just to Oregonians, but to the broader national and international community. If a state with Oregon’s environmental credentials turns its back on a sustainable food production method, it could embolden other jurisdictions to enact similarly misguided restrictions, ultimately undermining the progress we need to make in securing an environmentally responsible and resilient food system.

Rather than banning a promising and essential industry, I urge you to focus on developing science-driven regulations that ensure net-pen aquaculture would be conducted responsibly in Oregon’s waters. This approach would allow us to lead by example, demonstrating how sustainable aquaculture can coexist with conservation priorities.

I strongly urge you to reject HB 2965.

Sincerely,  
Hugh Cole  
Eugene, OR