

Submitter: Marjorie Cole

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2965

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2965, which seeks to prohibit fish farming in Oregon. This bill represents a step backward for our state's environmental leadership and would reduce global food security.

Fish farming is a valuable, necessary method of agriculture which plays a critical role in reducing world hunger and when done locally, reduces carbon emissions from overseas seafood importation.

As a retired registered nurse, I am disappointed Oregon would consider any public policy that ignores the food security crisis much of humanity is facing, which is worsening because of climate change. The United Nations (UN) recently reported that in 2023 over 700 million people, 9% of the world's population, were undernourished, 148 million children had stunted growth, and 45 million children under the age of 5 were affected by nutritional wasting. Nearly half of global deaths among children under 5 years of age are linked to undernutrition.

As wild fish stocks have dwindled, seafood prices have climbed worldwide. Now more than ever, even here in the Pacific Northwest, poor families struggle to put nutritious food on the table. Even while public health agencies tell us to eat more seafood – the poorest amongst us cannot afford it. We need sustainable fish farming to fight hunger and feed the world.

Finally, this bill supports policies that produce unnecessary greenhouse gases due to seafood importation. Former Governor Tom McCall was a true pioneer of Oregon's environmental policy, setting a precedent for forward-thinking conservation efforts that balance ecological protection with responsible resource use. Oregon has long been a leader in environmental stewardship, and enacting a ban on net-pen aquaculture contradicts our history of making well-informed, science-based environmental policy decisions.

Passing HB 2965 would send the wrong message—not just to Oregonians, but to the broader national and international community. If a state with Oregon's progressive credentials turns its back on a sustainable food production method, what does that say to the rest of the world?

I strongly urge you to reject HB 2965.

Sincerely,
Marjorie Cole
Eugene, OR