

Submitter: Katherine Lux

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

Dear Co-chair Helm, Co-chair Owens, and members of the committee,

As a proud Oregonian family, we see how restoration and protections can support wildlife and in return keep Oregon beautiful and healthy. Please support HB 3580 and HB 3587, and our invaluable rocky habitats and eelgrass meadows. These bills offer a great opportunity to support biodiversity, coastal economies, and increase resilience to a changing climate.

Oregon's underwater eelgrass meadows are biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks, and nursery habitat to many juvenile fish species. Their health is vital for sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and buffering against climate impacts. However, there are signs these essential habitats are in decline in Oregon. HB 3580 would set up a Taskforce to set conservation targets through a collaborative effort involving agencies, Tribes, scientists, local communities, and others. This bill is the first essential step to proactively prevent habitat loss.

My family makes regular trips, including bringing our friends from other states to the coast. We recognize and appreciate a healthy coast line. This support will keep visitor dollars coming to Oregon and be an example of what can be done before it is too late.

Oregon's rocky habitats, like Haystack Rock and Coquille Point, are iconic tourist destinations for millions of visitors. They are also incredibly important for millions of nesting birds, marine mammals, fish and invertebrates. Increasing climate impacts and human disturbance are threatening these special places. HB 3587 would provide needed agency coordination to better protect these sites. It also would set up a grant fund for local communities to engage the public on best practices to enjoy these places while minimizing disturbance to sensitive wildlife and habitats.

Please act to protect our coastal ecosystems. With a small investment we can ensure both eelgrass meadows and rocky habitats can be conserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Katherine Lux