

Submitter: Alyson Berman

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,

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3580 and HB 3587. Our rocky habitats and eelgrass meadows are critically important for the health of our coastal habitats. They support climate resilience, coastal economies, and millions of animals - from sea stars to seals to tufted puffins. The Oregon coast is a jewel, and a major source of tourist revenue for Oregon. Our eelgrass meadows needs your support so we can better understand how to protect and care for them.

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 before it's too late.

Now is the time to act to protect our coastal ecosystems. For a modest investment we can ensure both eelgrass meadows and rocky habitats can be conserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Alyson Berman