

Submitter: Chris Dodge

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 3580, which is vital for the conservation of eelgrass meadows in Oregon. Eelgrass meadows are an essential part of our coastal ecosystem, serving as nurseries for juvenile fish species such as salmon and herring, as well as shellfish. These species are not only crucial for our biodiversity but also for the health of our coastal economy.

In addition to supporting marine life, eelgrass meadows provide a number of ecological benefits. They are vital for the sequestration of carbon, potentially capturing carbon at a faster rate than forests, which is increasingly important in the fight against climate change. Eelgrass also plays a significant role in improving water quality via its ability to provide natural filtering.

However, eelgrass is currently in decline, and no one knows why. HB 3580 would establish a Taskforce to set conservation targets, assess monitoring programs, and evaluate policy barriers that may hinder the protection of eelgrass meadows. This collaborative effort would bring together agencies, Tribes, scientists, and local communities to develop effective strategies for preserving this important habitat.

I strongly urge you to support HB 3580, as it represents a critical step toward safeguarding eelgrass meadows and ensuring the health of Oregon's coastal ecosystems for future generations. We really need them! Thank you for your time and consideration.

~Chris Dodge