

Submitter: Lynn Herring

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 House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water,

I urge you to support HB 3580 (Eelgrass Action Bill).

Oregon's underwater eelgrass meadows are biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks and nursery habitat for many juvenile fish species like salmon and herring, mollusks and crustaceans. They provide habitat and food for migratory birds like Black Brant.

Eelgrass health is vital for sustaining our fisheries and thereby supporting coastal economies. Eelgrass meadows improve ocean water quality and buffer against climate impacts. However, there are signs these essential habitats are in decline in Oregon. HB 3580 would fund (\$400K) the Department of Land Conservation and Development to convene a Taskforce to set eelgrass conservation targets, assess monitoring programs and evaluate policy barriers through a collaborative effort involving agencies, Tribes, scientists, local communities, and other stakeholders. For a modest investment we can work to ensure that eelgrass meadow habitats thrive.

In Stewardship of our critical coastal habitats,  
Lynn Herring