

Submitter: Abby Knipp

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

Dear committee chair and members of this committee,

My name is Abby Knipp and I am a resident of North Bend, Oregon. I am a recreator, a scientist, and lover of the ocean. I dedicated years of research to studying climate change impacts in coastal ecosystems and I feel incredibly passionate about protecting marine and coastal environments. I now work for a non-profit on the south coast of Oregon, working to protect both the environment and people who are on the front lines of climate change. I frequently recreate in the estuary and find immense joy in paddling around, identifying cool inter-tidal organisms, and carefully walking out on the mud-flats during low tide. These coastal ecosystems are a true wonder and provide us humans with so many benefits - many that we cannot see, but they are working in our favor, such as eelgrass. But I also have first-hand experience seeing these ecosystems destroyed in other parts of the world and the subsequent impacts it had on local economies, social well-being, and overall environmental health. I fear for the future of our community due to the loss of this critical ecosystem.

I cannot stress enough how critical eelgrass is towards mitigating the impacts of climate change. But what I hope you take away, is how it also supports our economies and Coos County needs this plant to be protected in order for our community to thrive. This plant is a critical habitat for fish and crab, which support huge fisheries on the south coast of Oregon. I could not imagine what would happen to our community if the fisheries collapsed due to the loss of our fisheries habitat!. Eelgrass also supports our tourism economy - thousands of people come to recreate in the estuary and they want to see a thriving ecosystem. The loss of this plant means a loss of that ecosystem and the loss of an attractive tourism economy. Coos county is not a depressed community, but it will become one if we fail to secure funding to protect this vital ecosystem.

Please fully fund and support the Eelgrass Action Bill, for the benefit of coastal communities and all Oregonians who visit and enjoy the coast.

Thank you,  
Abby Knipp  
North Bend, Oregon