

Submitter: Kimberly Brown

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

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

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3580. I studied our native eelgrass on the Oregon Coast in Tillamook Bay for my masters research. Eelgrass supports a wide variety of economically important species including Dungeness Crab and salmon. Eelgrass meadow are incredibly biodiverse and sequester a large amount of carbon. The health of eelgrass beds is vital for sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and buffering against climate impacts. However, my research showed that eelgrass faces a variety of threats including invasive species, climate change, nutrient runoff, and coastal development to name a few. Seagrass populations are decreasing around the world and we need to be proactive about maintaining and restoring our eelgrass beds on the West Coast. 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 an essential for preventing habitat loss before it's too late. 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.

Now is the time for us to be proactive and act to protect our coastal ecosystems.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Brown,