



# CONSOLIDATED OREGON INDIVISIBLE NETWORK

Co-Chairs Representatives Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Representative McDonald, Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Water:

The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN), along with COIN's Climate Energy and Environment Team, **supports HB 3580** to establish a Task Force on eelgrass resources. COIN is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and engage with elected officials to promote causes for the benefit of all Oregonians. COIN's CEE Team collaborates with organizations, agencies, and groups across the Pacific Northwest to advocate, in part, for laws and programs that promote and protect our natural world and resources.

Eelgrass is a vital marine plant that supports coastal communities, wildlife, and fisheries. It provides food and habitats for many species, and helps to reduce coastal erosion. Eelgrass is a potential home for sea otters\*, and eelgrass beds provide shelter and foraging areas for fish, invertebrates, and other marine life. It is a food source for migratory waterfowl, sea turtles, and other birds, while it also absorbs carbon dioxide and methane.\*\* Eelgrass filters polluted runoff and absorbs excess nutrients, and eelgrass beds trap sediment and reduce the force of waves. Degradation of eelgrass is threatened by pollution and sediment runoff, rising sea levels and warmer water temperatures. Excessive nutrients can accelerate harmful algae growth on eelgrass blades, which can destroy it.

The federal government has designated eelgrass as Essential Fish Habitat. It is critical that conservation methods be explored. Not only is eelgrass essential for our oceans' health, but taking steps to protect it is vital to protect Oregon's fisheries industry and other Oregon industries dependent on a healthy coastal environment.

We urge you to pass HB 3580.

\* <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/biologists-restored-an-estuary-to-revive-eelgrass-then-an-otter-swam-118-miles-to-reach-it.htm>

\*\* For more on eelgrass as a carbon sequestering agent, see:  
[https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/2023-03/REVISED%20FINAL\\_San%20Diego%20Bay%20Eelgrass%20Blue%20Carbon%20Study%20report%202023-1-30.pdf](https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/2023-03/REVISED%20FINAL_San%20Diego%20Bay%20Eelgrass%20Blue%20Carbon%20Study%20report%202023-1-30.pdf)