



March 4, 2025

Representatives Ken Helm and Mark Owens, Co-Chairs
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon supports House Bill 3580

Co-chairs Helm, Owens and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a policy and action group with one mission: to restore and protect the natural world. Our staff works for clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife, open spaces and a livable climate. Our members across the state put grassroots support behind our research and advocacy.

We support [House Bill 3580](#) to improve the health of Oregon's eelgrass meadows, which are vital ecosystems that support countless marine species, stabilize our shorelines, and effectively store carbon from the atmosphere.

Eelgrass meadows [are found](#) in estuaries such as Coos Bay, Yaquina Bay, and Tillamook Bay, where they provide habitat for a wide range of marine species. These underwater meadows serve as nurseries for juvenile marine animals like salmon, rockfish and crabs.

Aside from habitat, eelgrass is also a powerful ally in building coastal resilience and mitigating the negative effects of climate change. [Some evidence](#) suggests that eelgrass meadows are able to store carbon at a far greater rate than terrestrial forests and help stabilize our coast to reduce erosion, both of which are important now more than ever before as our climate continues to change.

Despite their importance, Oregon has already lost [significant portions](#) of eelgrass habitat due to pollution, development, dredging and the impacts of climate change. These meadows also are not regularly monitored and there is an apparent lack of coordination amongst state agencies which manage estuaries. More investment in interagency coordination, restoration, adaptive management and goal setting is needed to better support these ecosystems - something that [House Bill 3580](#) seeks to address.

We urge the Oregon Legislature to pass [House Bill 3580](#) to safeguard our eelgrass meadows and the benefits they provide for future generations.

Sincerely,

Ian Giancarlo
Oceans Advocate
Environment Oregon