



American Fisheries Society Oregon Chapter

OR Chapter AFS: PO Box 8062 Portland, OR 97207-8062 www.orafs.org

Date: March 5, 2025

RE: OREGON CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 3587: ACTIONS TO HELP ROCKY HABITATS

Co-Chairs Rep. Helm and Owens and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS) comprises over 500 fisheries and aquatics science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, diverse private employers, college students, and retirees. ORAFS was established in 1964 as a chapter of the American Fisheries Society. Our mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of Oregon fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems for long-term public benefit by advancing science, education and public discourse concerning fisheries and aquatic science and by promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

We offer our strong support for HB 3587 for the following key reasons:

Oregon has been a national leader in understanding the nature and importance of its coastal resources. In 1994, the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan was adopted, and has been a solid framework for use and management. In 2023, Oregon designated eight new rocky habitat sites along the Oregon Coast based on a recommendation from the Ocean Policy Advisory Council and a new Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. These new sites were recommended as a result of careful research that illustrated strong public interest in their value for natural habitat and educational opportunities.

Rocky habitats have always attracted high public visitation. They provide educational and recreational value and support activities from tidepooling, diving, and fishing. The reefs create refuges for juvenile and smaller fish and provide a complex surface that supports a diverse range of algae and invertebrate species. They are heavily used by marine mammals, and nesting birds.

The current agency and community capacity is insufficient to fully implement the needs for a regionally based coordination of management plans for each site. Support from the legislation will ensure that community-based partners, and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development will be able to develop site management plans pursuant to the portion of the Territorial Sea Plan related to rocky habitat management. This funding of \$300,000 provided through the Ocean Science Trust will support a competitive grant program targeted for locally based projects to assist in protecting and understanding the unique nature of these sites and assist in protecting their value for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our support for HB 3587. ORAFS is in support of legislation that protects our marine, intertidal, and freshwater resources.

Respectfully,

Troy Brandt – ORAFS, Legislative Committee Chair, 503-307-8367, tbrandt415@gmail.com