

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, & Water  
March 5, 2025

I am writing in support of the Eel Grass Action Bill, HB 3580.

I am a citizen scientist who volunteers my time every month collecting field data on seabirds (and other bird) mortality at beaches on the Oregon coast. I have educated myself about the importance of eelgrass to the larger marine ecosystem. Why does eelgrass matter? It supports fisheries by providing nursery habitat for juvenile fish. It increases resilience, by sequestering carbon (35x the rate of rainforests), dampening storm surges, and buffering ocean acidification. It improves ecosystem health by supporting biodiversity including birds, some resident, some migratory, and improving water quality.

With all that eelgrass provides us, its health has not been consistently tracked and there are signs that it is declining due to the changing climate, and habitat destruction related to development. Eelgrass provides natural, cost-effective climate mitigation. This is a truly priceless benefit without which, much more costly measures will need to be pursued later. If the fish nursery habitat collapses, so could our fishing economy. It is basic undergrad knowledge that humans depend on the web of life. We are a part of the natural world and it is in our best interest to steward it wisely. That is why I urge you to please pass HB 3580 in order that our state can better care for this important resource. Thank you.

Deirdre Young  
Portland, OR