

Submitter: Ginger Berryman

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

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

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3580, and our invaluable eelgrass meadows. This bill offers a great opportunity to support biodiversity, coastal economies, and increase resilience to a changing climate.

I am a small business owner in Oregon, and the coast is an important part of my business. The beauty and diversity draws people from all over the country, and even the world. I know this first hand because I am an elopement photographer. I've had clients from Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Florida, Louisiana, Kansas, British Columbia, and more, who have all reached out specifically to elope on the Oregon Coast. The health of our coast benefits all types of people, communities and businesses in ways many folks never think about.

Oregon's underwater eelgrass meadows are biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks, and nursery habitat to many juvenile fish species. Their health is vital for sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and buffering against climate impacts. However, there are signs these essential habitats are in decline in Oregon. 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 the first essential step to proactively prevent habitat loss before it's too late.

We don't want to look back think we could have done more to protect our coast. I recently read a quote that hit home for me... I do not remember it verbatim, but the sentiment is this: in movies, people travel to the past and worry about committing some small act that'll drastically change the future, but folks never think that small acts in our present can have profound affects on our shared future.

Now is the time to act to protect our coastal ecosystems. For a modest investment we can ensure both eelgrass meadows and rocky habitats can be conserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Ginger Berryman