

Submitter: Marla Strong

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 HB 3587, and our invaluable Rocky Habitats and eelgrass meadows. These bills offer a great opportunity to support biodiversity, coastal economies, and increase resilience to a changing climate.

When I go to the coast I want to see our oceans teeming with life and remaining beautiful landscapes for generations to enjoy. As a resident of Oregon I find the coast an essential travel destination throughout the year and as a marine biology student, I have a great passion for our oceans and the life and habitats that they provide. I am asking for protections on these habitats so that my children and their children and generations to come will be able to enjoy the Oregon coast as I do.

Oregon's underwater eelgrass meadows provide the necessary habitats for life to flourish as well as provide vital protections for our land and well being. They are biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks, and nursery habitat to many juvenile fish species. These areas are essential for sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and buffering against climate impacts.

Without your help, these habitats will continue to decline in productivity. 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.

Rocky Habitats such as Haystack Rock and Coquille Point, are iconic pillars of our Oregon coast. Providing eye catching scenery and stunning pictures opportunities. They are also incredibly important for millions of nesting birds, marine mammals, fish and invertebrates.

Increasing climate impacts and human disturbance are threatening our coastal Rocky areas. HB 3587 would provide needed agency coordination to better protect these sites. It also would set up a grant fund for local communities to engage the public on best practices to enjoy these places while minimizing disturbance to sensitive wildlife and habitats.

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. Please take action to support these bills and provide for the betterment of our environment and generations of humans and wildlife alike.

Sincerely,
Marla Strong