

Central Coast Food Web
3814 Yaquina Bay Road
Newport, OR 97365

March 17, 2025

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntyre and Members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3568 – the Seafood to Schools Act.

This bill is important to me because with education funding levels questionable at best, with more programming being cut, with less training in the trades, and more young people seeking work where they live, this bill is imperative to our children's future. We have one of the greatest resources of food, work, and economic impact, our fisheries, at our fingertips. We already lose close to 90% of the fish caught off of our shores to the global market. Let's not lose these opportunities for our children, our schools, our fishers, and our future. The cost of this support is minimal compared to what we will lose without your support and championing of this bill and the hope it contains. This bill will support our fishing industry on the coast, as well as provides healthy proteins to our children around the state. It's a win for the fishing industry, for our local economies on the coast, and our children's health.

Right now, our Coastal communities are in the process of building necessary infrastructure and capacity to bring more Oregon-landed seafood to coastal and inland communities in our state. Through active work on this issue, OCVA and the Oregon Ocean Cluster (OOC) connected with the Oregon Farm to School Network to explore expanding access to - and education about - seafood for Oregon students. This has become the Seafood to Schools working group.

While the Seafood to Schools working group has successfully increased sales to schools, coordinated culinary training and resources for child nutrition programs, developed seafood recipes for child nutrition programs, it has also identified opportunities and needs for future growth. Please keep this amazing momentum moving and help raise this effort to the next level of success!!

The Seafood to Schools Bill is a wonderful way to ensure that school food preparers and students have the technical support to prepare fresh local seafood. It also would support training for future chefs in seafood butchery and preparation, in addition to sparking their imaginations through development of creative kid-friendly local seafood dishes.

This funding is not an expenditure; it's an investment that will pay off for generations. We encourage you to pass HB 3568.

It's good for the fishing industry, it's good for our coastal economy and it's healthy for our children.

Sincerely,
Jim King, Executive Director