



Bay Area Chamber of Commerce

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Bay Area Chamber of Commerce

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March 17, 2025

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

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 3568 – The Seafood to Schools Act

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntyre, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and our 451 business members serving Coos Bay, North Bend, Charleston, and the surrounding areas, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 3568, the Seafood to Schools Act. This legislation presents a unique opportunity to bolster our coastal economies, support the fishing industry, and provide nutritious, locally sourced proteins to students across Oregon.

Key Provisions of HB 3568:

- **Department of Education Allocation:** Appropriates \$600,000 for distribution to the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) to promote seafood in public schools through educational programming, marketing, procurement support, and product development.
- **Department of Agriculture Allocation:** Provides \$200,000 to implement local food incentives and develop seafood products suitable for public school nutrition programs.

Anticipated Benefits:

- **Economic Support for Coastal Communities:** By integrating Oregon-landed seafood into school nutrition programs, HB 3568 directly supports our fishing industry, leading to job creation and economic growth in coastal regions.
- **Educational and Nutritional Advantages:** Introducing students to locally sourced seafood enriches their diets with healthy proteins and fosters an appreciation for Oregon's maritime heritage.

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- **Sustainable Practices:** Utilizing local seafood reduces the carbon footprint associated with food transportation and promotes sustainable fishing practices.

The Seafood to Schools working group, comprising OCVA, the Oregon Ocean Cluster (OOC), and the Oregon Farm to School Network, has laid a strong foundation by increasing seafood sales to schools, coordinating culinary training, and developing seafood recipes tailored for child nutrition programs. HB 3568 will amplify these efforts, ensuring that school food preparers and students receive the necessary support to prepare and enjoy fresh, local seafood.

Investing in this program is not merely an expenditure but a strategic initiative that will yield benefits for generations. We respectfully urge you to pass HB 3568, as it serves the interests of our fishing industry, strengthens our coastal economies, and enhances the health and well-being of our children. visittheoregoncoast.com

Thank you for considering our perspective on this vital legislation.

Sincerely,



Rosey Thomas
Executive Director
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