

Submitter: Bonny MacDonald
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3568

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 seafood was missing from the food options in my schools in Oregon when I was growing up. While it is common knowledge that seafood is nutritious and provides levels of omega-3 fatty acids and other micro-nutrients in abundance; I think our school food systems are exactly where more seafood should be implemented because these nutrients are needed for growing minds and bodies.

The thyroid needs iodine to work properly with other crucial organs, the brain needs omega-3's to help with learning and memory.

And culturally, there is so much the ocean can give our children- a sense of relationship with nature, a source for food, and as this bill explains- skill growth in working with seafood. That will be good both mind, spirit, potential job growth, and ability to feed oneself and family.

We are doing a children a disservice by not incorporating healthy Oregon seafood in their diets. I think there is a lot of room for a children's food expert to help direct which foods will be more appealing for different age groups, but it needs to start somewhere just like pizza and chicken nuggets, all foods are tried for a first time. And we must nurture a culture where seafood is a normal and vital part of ones diet.

Furthermore-

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,

Bonny MacDonald

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