

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

As a full-time resident of Port Orford, Oregon, where fishing is 30% of our local economy, this bill is important to me because it supports Oregon's coastal communities, strengthens our local food systems, and ensures that our children have access to high-quality, nutritious seafood. As a supporter of sustainable food programs and local industries, I believe that investing in our fishing communities while promoting healthy eating habits among students is a win-win for Oregon.

HB 3568 will boost Oregon's fishing industry, provide schools with a valuable and underutilized source of healthy protein, and enhance educational opportunities for students to learn about marine ecosystems, local fisheries, and food sustainability. It builds on the success of the Oregon Farm to School Network by expanding access to fresh, locally caught seafood and ensuring that school nutrition programs are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to prepare it.

Right now, our coastal communities are actively working to improve infrastructure and capacity to bring more Oregon-landed seafood to schools and local markets. Organizations such as the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) and the Oregon Ocean Cluster (OOC) have already made great strides in this effort, partnering with the Oregon Farm to School Network to develop the Seafood to Schools working group.

While this working group has increased sales to schools, coordinated culinary training, and developed seafood-based recipes for child nutrition programs, there is still more work to be done. HB 3568 will provide the funding needed to sustain this momentum and expand seafood education efforts statewide.

Beyond economic and educational benefits, this bill also supports Oregon's environmental and public health goals. Encouraging the consumption of locally caught seafood reduces reliance on imported products, decreases carbon emissions from transportation, and ensures that students receive fresh, minimally processed food with high nutritional value.

This funding is not just an expenditure but an investment in Oregon's future. I strongly urge you to pass HB 3568 to strengthen our coastal economy, provide healthier food for our children, and foster a greater connection between students and their local food systems.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kim Foster