

**HB 3262**

My name is John Corbin. I have been a crab fisherman out of the Columbia River for thirty five years. I am also the chairman of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission.

I had hoped to be here today to testify, but schedule conflicts have taken me in another direction.

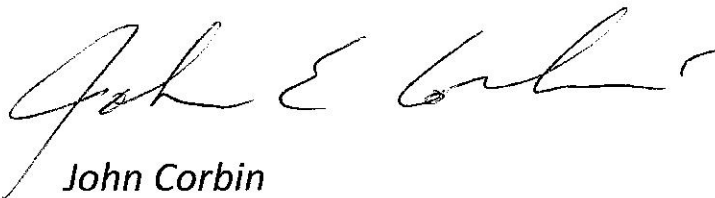
Derelict gear has been a problem in the industry since the beginning of the crab fishery. Crab gear gets cut off or dragged out of place by other boats, tug boats, kelp beds, currents and storms.

During crab season, from December through August, fishermen encounter many of these stray pots. They are brought to the dock and returned to their owners. September through November, while crab season is closed, the fleet is mostly tied up or engaged in other fisheries. There is not much incentive for fishermen to go out looking for stray gear. The Crab Commission has tried many different programs to get the fleet engaged in cleaning up what gear gets left behind, but with varying success. Since it is expensive to get a boat and crew out on the water, the small bounty the Crab Commission was able to pay was not enough to entice many to go. It also was not sustainable to the Commission's budget to keep the program going.

The state of Washington came up with a program several years ago that is gaining momentum. Two weeks after crab season is over, (which gives fisherman an extra fifteen days to corral their stray pots), all pots left in the ocean are declared *abandoned* and become the property of the state. A permit is issued by the state to licensed commercial fishing boats to salvage crab gear. The boat declares its intention to retrieve gear and when it returns to port with its haul, the derelict gear is inspected, tagged and becomes the property of the boat owner. Last year, Washington boats salvaged almost one thousand derelict crab pots.

The Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission and its membership believes that Oregon House Bill 3262 will provide the same success that the Washington state crab industry has had. This bill offers incentive to Oregon's crab industry to help solve a long standing industry problem.

I urge you to pass this bill.



*John Corbin*

*Chairman*

*Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission*