

March 5, 2013

House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee
Rep. Brad Witt, Chair
900 Court St. NE, Room 347
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: In support of HB 3262

Dear Chair Witt and Committee members:

The Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission (ODCC) is an industry-funded agency under the umbrella of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Commodity Commission program. We represent 429 'limited entry' Oregon Dungeness crab permit holders and it's on their behalf that we encourage your support of HB 3262.

The Oregon Dungeness crab fleet deploys upwards of 120k crab pots in the ocean annually between the Columbia River and the OR/CA border. Due to a variety of circumstances (i.e. winter storms, shipping traffic, entanglement, legitimate loss and in some cases, abandonment) not all those pots get brought back in to the dock at the end of the season, resulting in a 'derelict gear' problem that needs to be addressed.

Over the past four years, the ODCC has worked in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and independently on a variety of programs (i.e. volunteer D/G recovery 'weeks', end-of-season crab pot roundups, crab pot 'bounties', etc.) that have only been marginally successful and haven't generated the kind of fleet support and participation necessary to be truly effective or sustainable.

HB 3262 would exempt derelict/abandoned commercial Dungeness crab pots left/found in the ocean after August 28th from Oregon's personal property laws for recovery purposes in an ODFW-monitored program. The bill will allow the industry to work with ODFW to create a post-season derelict gear clean-up program similar to the successful program implemented in WA-state as a result of legislation passed in 2009¹.

¹ *In 2012, 18 permits were issued and 908 derelict pots were recovered.*

Passage of HB 3262 and the corresponding program will provide incentive to encourage crabbers to bring their gear in before someone else, who can then claim the pots, does it for them. At the same time, it will create a financial incentive for those fishermen willing to take the time and effort to go back out on the ocean at the end of the season and round up derelict gear during the recovery period.

The ODCC recognizes that it is only a matter of time before the state or federal government 'cracks down' on the commercial fishing industry and forces it to deal with the derelict fishing gear problem through some type of regulatory action. We feel that an industry-based solution would be far more effective, from both cost and practicality perspectives, and stands a better chance of solving the problem in the long run.

We would appreciate your support of HB 3262 as it moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "NFurman". The letters are cursive and connected.

Nick Furman
ODCC

cc: ODCC