



January 29, 2015

Support for HB 2463 – Submerged Land Enhancement Fund

Chair Clem, members of the House Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 2463. The Surfrider Foundation's Oregon Chapters are strongly supportive of the bill's intent and especially encouraged by the establishment of the Submerged Land Enhancement Fund. Our chapters throughout Oregon see the negative impacts of abandoned structures and debris on our waterways through our extensive volunteer cleanup efforts of Oregon's magnificent rivers, estuaries and ocean beaches.

A large area of concern for our members and cleanup partners are abandoned structures and large marine debris items that have a high potential to become dislodged and travel downstream. Land-based debris accounts for the overwhelming majority of debris in our oceans and the contributions from inland waterway debris, as well as the devastating environmental impacts are well documented. As evidenced from this past December's cleanup efforts during high volume rain events, our Surfrider chapters and partners removed 6 different docks over 8 cleanup events adding up to over 100ft that washed out of two local rivers onto Lincoln County beaches alone.

Beyond the costly cleanups that impact various state and local agencies, local ports, private property and NGOs alike, these types of debris items can create extensive environmental impacts upon their dispersal into varying coastal and inland waterway environments. Our chapter and community partners in Coos Bay were confronted with this issue first hand and continue to deal with the extensive cleanup of various 50-60ft sections of Styrofoam encased dock that washed ashore Lighthouse Beach. The sections of dock, which originated from Charleston harbor, subsequently broke apart in the high surf and spread beads and chunks of foam for miles. One year and over 24 community and agency cleanups later, the foam is still found extensively within this beach area. The cost for Oregon Parks and Recreation Department was in the tens of thousands and the issue drew a hearing from the Senate Interim Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development last May. See attached photos from a cleanup event, something one has to see to actually understand the impact.

It is through this volunteer cleanup experience and our understanding of land-based debris contributions within the ocean environment, that we believe that certain priority marine debris, especially such items that have a high potential to become dislodged and dispersed into downstream environments, should be additionally

defined and provided for inclusion within this bill. Additionally, whereby Section 4 provides for fund establishment, there is a lack of clarity in funding allocation, prioritization and administration. While this clarification may not be established in statute, we believe that defining a clear process with the above considerations in mind is important for a variety of stakeholders. From large ports with big problems to our smaller coastal ports, private property owners and recreational users, we believe that a balanced and well-established process for prioritizing and maximizing fund allocation is necessary and may be required to establish by rule.

Sincerely,

Charlie Plybon  
Oregon Policy Manager  
Surfrider Foundation

Photo Attachments:



Lighthouse Beach following docks breaking apart in surf zone 01/2014



Volunteers attempt to clean up highly dispersed foam on Lighthouse Beach