



**ORCA: Oregon Coast Alliance**  
***Protecting the Oregon Coast***

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Feb. 20, 2017

Oregon Legislature  
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Rep. Brian Clem, Chair  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2786, Removal-fill in Wetlands

Via email: [hagmr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:hagmr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit whose mission is to protect coastal natural resources and aid in community livability. We write you today concerning HB 2106, a bill to amend laws relating to mining and mineral resources.

ORCA **opposes** HB 2786, concerning removal-fill of wetlands.

This bill narrows the wetlands subject to Oregon's removal-fill law only to those appearing in the State Wetlands Inventory. But only a small portion of the state's wetlands are pinpointed in the SWI – it is not meant to be a comprehensive and detailed inventory. It is based on a national inventory and old aerial photos. In other words, it is essentially an overview only; local inventories are essential.

But many areas do not have local inventories, and so small forested wetlands remain unmapped, as are many in farmland. In Clatsop County, for example, the southern part of the County has extensive small wetlands that are critically important in reducing flooding during the common and frequent heavy rainfall periods. These have been mapped only because the community undertook a local wetland inventory. But many other communities or counties do not have the resources for inventories.

These come to the attention of policymakers during development applications, local or county inventory updates and other means. It is essential that the Department of State Lands retain the ability to regulate removal fill in wetlands and protect these critical areas.

Rivers and streams are particularly vulnerable to unauthorized and inappropriate removal-fill. But streamside riparian areas are not on the SWI, and would presumably be no longer subject to the removal-fill law. This would be devastating to fragile riparian areas statewide, harming river ecology, salmon habitat and drinking water quality.

ORCA recommends the Committee table HB 2786.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please place this testimony into the record for this measure.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Cameron La Follette*

Cameron La Follette