

Submitter: Fletcher Conn

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2909

I am a Native Oregonian, Beaver Alum and current resident of Oceanside, OR. My background in commercial lending, particularly the SBA and F&B industry gives me insight into the environments and resources that foster economic growth in certain food and beverage categories. After having spent considerable time here over the past decade, it's become apparent there is a lack of locally caught seafood available to purchase. There is a significant opportunity to create a more sustainable seafood supply chain and provide local entrepreneurs the opportunity to harvest, process, store, distribute and retail locally harvested seafood.

Issues hampering potential growth in the Blue Economy that would be addressed by HB 2909:

- The seafood industry has been consolidated to a point where the barriers of entry for smaller seafood businesses are nearly impossible to overcome
- Due to the seafood industry and tourism industry both being the primary drivers of economics on the OR Coast 1) creating an ecosystem that streamlines the supply chain to both create opportunities to harvest, process, distribute, and consume will create local value and more jobs opportunities and local prosperity.
- Capital intensive requirements to start and/or expand business, lack of access to traditional bank capital for investments, lack of financial brain capital on the OR coast, long history of doing things a certain way.
- Seasonality for both the seafood and tourism industry combined with the volatility of commercial fishing industry create a difficult economic environment for private businesses to want to invest into these industries without additional support and resources from local and federal agencies.

The OR Coast is a place that I've come to love for its rugged beauty and abundance. The environmental impact of importing the majority of seafood consumed on the OR Coast while exporting far in excess is obvious. It also robs local residents of economic opportunities and quality of life. I dream of the OR Coast being a place that is prosperous with decent jobs, housing and a sustainable economy. HB 2909 is a step in that direction.

Sincerely,

Fletcher Conn