

Submitter: Emily Reinig
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: HB3382

This bill is a bad decision that allows special interests to cut corners at the expense of the rest of the citizens of Oregon, and especially those residents of Coos County. The bill would gravely weaken the land use planning system as it applies to the coast.

The bill would enable ports to dredge major rivers without complying with state and local land use regulations.

Estuaries are critical coastal ecosystems, vital links between land and sea. They nurture a variety of species of interest to people such as salmon, Dungeness crab, herring, oysters, clams, and migratory waterfowl. Intact estuarine systems can enhance water quality, provide buffering from storms, and sequester carbon. They provide recreational opportunities for both residents and tourists. Our land use laws don't prevent all development, but they do require careful consideration before actions are allowed which might damage these public resources. It would be reckless to remove the stop signs that ensure caution and allow ports to barrel ahead with development schemes.

The bill would not only undermine Oregon's land use system, but cripple our ability to limit federal actions that could harm our estuarine environments. Under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the federal government has to exercise "federal consistency" with state laws that are part of a recognized coastal management program. If Oregon's coastal land use planning regulations are eliminated, we lose our leverage over the federal government through the CZMA.

DO IT THE RIGHT WAY!

Counties and cities have estuary management plans (EMPs) for these precious places. (As it happens, the EMPs for both Coos Bay and Yaquina Bay are in the midst of update processes at present.) No consideration has been given to the chaos that would be created if this bill should pass. Local jurisdictions would either have to scramble to revise comprehensive plans, or have plans that had become meaningless for significant portions of their territories.