

RE: Support for HB 3382 with -4 amendments

May 16, 2023

I am writing in support of HB 3382 with the -4 amendments. I am a child of Coos Bay. In my early years I remember strong families, industry on the waterfront and a community that had resources. We were one of the largest lumber exporters in the world. Today, our community is hemorrhaging its children. There isn't much of a bright future to stay here for, or come back to, in many cases.

Many who do stay are woefully underemployed or turn to drugs and alcohol to comfort themselves from the depression. We are now among the most impoverished counties in the state, and have been for a good while now. I'm reminded of it constantly when I drive up Virginia Avenue in North Bend and observe the recently built DHS palace on the hill near the airport. I support social services but we shouldn't have this level of need here. It is completely avoidable. HB 3382 is a step toward turning around the scourge of generational poverty in the community I love.

I graduated from Marshfield High School in 1995. I've watched most of my friends go away and never come back, except to visit. Their families leave to be nearer their grandchildren. Many of them don't want to leave and even more would love to come back. I was one of those people. I found a way to do it, but it's not easy. An opportunity to come home should be more readily available. This is an opportunity to create jobs that can bring back our children to raise their own kids here. They will build new houses and support our schools, local government and safety net with their tax dollars.

The bill, as amended, requires mitigation and no net loss in critical habitat. It also allows for industrial uses to occur in certain already designated areas, while other areas are protected. The amendments present a great compromise that considers industry, the environment and other aspects of our community. This is actually what they are talking about when they say "the Oregon way." I know because I've never called any other state home and I've been paying a lot of attention over the years.

People get really tied up in the available workforce now. I'm here to tell you that the community already has built a potential workforce. They are out working in other communities right now. But if you build it, they will come back. And this community can move toward a much brighter future, which is more reminiscent of our prosperous past. I'd like to see that happen in my lifetime and this is the best way to make that happen. I urge you to support HB 3382 with the -4 amendments. Please help our coastal community to lift itself out of poverty.

Sincerely,

Rick Osborn

Coos Bay, Oregon