

HB 3580 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Taskforce on Eelgrass Resources.

Detailed Summary

Establishes the Taskforce on Eelgrass Resources. Specifies membership consisting of at least 19 members, directs the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development to provide staff support and requires all state agencies to assist the task force as required and to the extent permitted by laws relating to confidentiality. Establishes internal operation procedures for members. Requires Task Force to submit a progress report by September 15, 2026, and a final report containing findings and recommendations no later than September 15, 2027, to one or more interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to natural resources. Sunsets Task Force on December 31, 2027. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

Requires the Taskforce on Eelgrass Resources in consultation with communities, industries, businesses, impacted stakeholders, federally recognized tribes in Oregon, as far as practicable, relevant federal agencies, and in consultation and collaboration with the Oregon Climate Action Commission and other relevant state agencies, to:

- Develop a strategy to assess the current and historic extent of eelgrass resources in Oregon’s estuaries using relevant data resources.
- Develop evidence-based recommendations for statewide targets for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of eelgrass resources by 2040 aimed to achieve net ecological gain of eelgrass resources and habitat function and make policy and regulatory recommendations on how to achieve those targets.
- Develop actions and recommendations for state and local governments to maintain existing eelgrass beds and address eelgrass decline.
- Examine the existing regulatory framework for eelgrass resource management across state agencies to identify inefficiencies and barriers to meeting developed conservation and restoration targets.
- Evaluate and make recommendations for needed actions and inter-agency coordination to address water quality impacts on eelgrass.
- Consult with restoration practitioners to assess barriers in state policies or permitting for eelgrass conservation and enhancement activities and identify streamlining restoration permitting processes to enable certain habitat enhancement activities.
- Develop recommendations for clarifying and revising agency roles to effectively manage, maintain, monitor, and map eelgrass resources, enforce permit conditions, and achieve statewide targets.
- Develop recommendations to incentivize eelgrass projects consistent with statewide eelgrass targets conducted by nongovernmental organizations, community groups, tribal governments, and other stakeholders.
- Assess the capacity and constraints of existing eelgrass monitoring and mapping programs and make recommendations on technical improvements that could improve mapping frequency, data quality and quantity and public access to data and allow agencies to develop carbon stock estimates and meet statewide eelgrass targets.
- Develop a research agenda to answer key questions needed to conserve and enhance eelgrass and eliminate stressors.

HB 3580 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

- Solicit recommendations on any other topic related to eelgrass and estuary management, research, mapping and monitoring, mitigation, state policy, enforcement, agency coordination, stressors, and restoration from state agencies.
- Develop cost estimates for implementing any action recommended by the taskforce and identify potential funding sources.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon's territorial sea extends three miles from the coastline, falling under state jurisdiction. Rocky habitats account for approximately 41% of Oregon's 362-mile coastline and 6% of the state's subtidal area. These areas include headlands, tidepools, rocky beaches and cliffs, as well as offshore rocks, islands, and reefs. Oregon's territorial sea, and as such its rocky habitats, along with its natural resources, is managed by both state and federal agencies in trust for the public's benefit. The Oregon Territorial Sea Plan, established in 1994, outlines a set of goals and policies that serve as a guiding framework for agencies to follow in the management of resources within this area.