

# House Bill 3580

Sponsored by Representatives GOMBERG, JAVADI; Representatives ANDERSEN, HELM, Senators ANDERSON, FREDERICK, GOLDEN, PHAM K, SOLLMAN, TAYLOR, WEBER

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: This Act creates the Task Force on Eelgrass Resources. (Flesch Readability Score 94.3). Establishes the Task Force on Eelgrass Resources. Provides duties of the task force and directs the task force to submit a report to the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2027. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to eelgrass resources in state waters; and declaring an emergency.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. (1) The Task Force on Eelgrass Resources is established.**

5 **(2) The task force consists of at least 19 members who shall be appointed by the Director**  
6 **of the Department of Land Conservation and Development as follows:**

7 **(a) Two members to represent conservation groups;**

8 **(b) Two members to represent the seafood and aquaculture industries;**

9 **(c) At least two members to represent academic institutions and estuarine or eelgrass**  
10 **researchers;**

11 **(d) One member to represent local governments;**

12 **(e) One member to represent restoration practitioners;**

13 **(f) Two members to represent estuary partnerships, including the South Slough National**  
14 **Estuarine Research Reserve;**

15 **(g) One member to represent ports;**

16 **(h) One member to represent the angler or recreational fishing community;**

17 **(i) One member to represent the coastal tourism industry;**

18 **(j) One member to represent Oregon Sea Grant;**

19 **(k) At least one member to represent the Department of Land Conservation and Devel-**  
20 **opment;**

21 **(L) At least one member to represent the State Department of Fish and Wildlife;**

22 **(m) At least one member to represent the Department of State Lands;**

23 **(n) At least one member to represent the Department of Environmental Quality; and**

24 **(o) At least one member to represent the State Department of Agriculture.**

25 **(3) In addition to the members appointed under subsection (2) of this section:**

26 **(a) The Director of the Department of Land Conservation and Development shall invite**  
27 **one member from each of the nine federally recognized Indian tribes in this state to serve**  
28 **as members of the task force, as willing and able to participate.**

29 **(b) The director may appoint up to five additional members with experience in:**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (A) Conducting eelgrass research or restoration or managing eelgrass resources; or

2 (B) Land use, geographic information system (GIS) and estuary planning.

3 (4) The task force shall carry out the duties described in section 2 of this 2025 Act in  
4 accordance with section 3 of this 2025 Act.

5 (5) A majority of the members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the transaction  
6 of business.

7 (6) Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the members  
8 of the task force.

9 (7) The director shall select one member of the task force to serve as chairperson and  
10 another to serve as vice chairperson, with the duties and powers necessary for the per-  
11 formance of the functions of the offices as the director determines.

12 (8) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the director shall make an appointment to become  
13 immediately effective.

14 (9) The task force shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson  
15 or of a majority of the members of the task force.

16 (10) The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.

17 (11)(a) The task force shall submit a progress report in the manner provided by ORS  
18 192.245 to the legislative committees or interim legislative committees of the Legislative  
19 Assembly related to natural resources no later than September 15, 2026.

20 (b) The task force shall submit a final report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245 to  
21 the legislative committees or interim legislative committees of the Legislative Assembly re-  
22 lated to natural resources no later than September 15, 2027. The report shall include the  
23 findings and recommendations of the task force described in section 2 of this 2025 Act and  
24 may include recommendations for legislation.

25 (12) The Department of Land Conservation and Development shall provide staff support  
26 to the task force.

27 (13) All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to assist  
28 the task force in the performance of the duties of the task force and, to the extent permitted  
29 by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the task  
30 force consider necessary to perform their duties.

31 **SECTION 2.** The Task Force on Eelgrass Resources shall:

32 (1) Identify relevant data sources and develop a strategy to conduct an assessment of the  
33 current and historic extent of eelgrass resources in this state's estuaries.

34 (2) Develop recommendations for statewide targets for the protection, conservation and  
35 enhancement of eelgrass resources by 2040, informed by the best available scientific infor-  
36 mation and current and future predictions of habitat suitability. The targets must be  
37 commensurate with the level of observed and anticipated eelgrass habitat decline and aim  
38 to achieve net ecological gain of eelgrass resources and habitat function.

39 (3) Develop actions and recommendations that the state and local governments should  
40 undertake to maintain existing eelgrass beds and address eelgrass decline.

41 (4) Examine the existing regulatory framework for eelgrass resource management across  
42 state agencies, including monitoring, leasing and enforcement authorities, to identify ineffi-  
43 ciencies and barriers to meeting the conservation and restoration targets developed under  
44 subsection (2) of this section.

45 (5) Make policy and regulatory recommendations to achieve the statewide targets devel-

1 oped under subsection (2) of this section, including, but not limited to, recommendations for:

- 2 (a) The withdrawal of critical areas from leasing;
- 3 (b) Establishing targeted provisions for estuarine planning;
- 4 (c) Improving the evaluation of projects that may disturb eelgrass habitat;
- 5 (d) Shellfish growing or harvesting conditions;
- 6 (e) Supporting activities that enhance eelgrass; and
- 7 (f) Actions needed to mitigate negative impacts on eelgrass.

8 (6) Evaluate and make recommendations for needed actions and coordination between  
9 agencies to address water quality impacts on eelgrass.

10 (7) Consult with restoration practitioners to:

11 (a) Assess barriers in state policies or permitting for eelgrass conservation and en-  
12 hancement activities; and

13 (b) Identify opportunities to streamline restoration permitting processes to enable  
14 large-scale habitat enhancement, incentivize private projects and enhance workforce capacity  
15 to support habitat enhancement and restoration activities.

16 (8) Develop recommendations for clarifying and revising the roles of agencies to effec-  
17 tively manage eelgrass resources and maintain existing eelgrass, improve monitoring and  
18 mapping, enforce permit conditions and achieve the statewide targets developed under sub-  
19 section (2) of this section.

20 (9) Develop recommendations to incentivize eelgrass projects conducted by nongovern-  
21 mental organizations, community groups, tribal governments and other stakeholders con-  
22 sistent with the statewide targets developed under subsection (2) of this section.

23 (10) Assess the capacity and constraints of existing monitoring and mapping programs  
24 for eelgrass and make recommendations on technical improvements that could improve  
25 mapping frequency, data quality and quantity and public access to data and allow agencies  
26 to develop estimates of carbon stocks and track progress in meeting the statewide targets  
27 developed under subsection (2) of this section.

28 (11) Develop a research agenda to answer key questions needed to conserve and enhance  
29 eelgrass and eliminate stressors.

30 (12) Solicit recommendations from state agencies on any other topic related to eelgrass  
31 and estuary management, research, mapping and monitoring, mitigation, state policy,  
32 enforcement, agency coordination, stressors and restoration.

33 (13) Develop cost estimates for implementing recommended actions described in this  
34 section and identify potential sources of funding.

35 **SECTION 3.** In carrying out the duties described in section 2 of this 2025 Act, the Task  
36 Force on Eelgrass Resources shall:

37 (1) Consult with communities, industries, businesses and other stakeholders impacted by  
38 eelgrass habitat loss and the policy proposals and recommendations of the task force.

39 (2) Consult with federally recognized tribes in this state on the cultural and ecological  
40 importance of eelgrass meadows.

41 (3) As far as is practicable, consult and collaborate with relevant federal government  
42 agencies.

43 (4) Consult and collaborate with the Oregon Climate Action Commission and any other  
44 relevant state agencies.

45 **SECTION 4.** Sections 1 to 3 of this 2025 Act are repealed on December 31, 2027.

1        **SECTION 5. This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public**  
2        **peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect**  
3        **on its passage.**

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