

Submitter: Chris Berrie

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

Dear Co-chairs Helm and Owens and members of the committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB 3580 and HB 3587 and ask for your support of our invaluable rocky habitats and eelgrass meadows. These bills will boost biodiversity, coastal economies, and improve our efforts to combat climate change.

I have personally observed the decimation of eelgrass forests by commercial fishery activities in Tillamook Bay. I walk the beach between Barview and Twin Rocks almost every day. I have documented and reported, to Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, extensive accumulations of eelgrass that has washed ashore. These eelgrass meadows in the bay provide healthy biodiversity, carbon sinks, and nursery habitat to many juvenile fish species. They are critical for sustaining our fisheries, water quality and for buttressing our defense against climate impacts. These essential habitats are in peril. HB 3580 would establish conservation goals through cooperation between all stakeholders. This bill is a critical start to taking the offense in restoring habitat loss before it's beyond repair.

Our remarkable rocky habitats, like Haystack Rock, Twin Rocks, Tillamook Rock and Table Rock attract millions of visitors annually. They are vital, life-sustaining habitat for sea birds, marine mammals, fish and invertebrates. Climate impacts and human disturbance are harming these critical places. HB 3587 will establish needed agency coordination to defend these sites and set up funding for local communities to engage the public on best approaches to reduce disruption to sensitive flora and fauna habitats.

Now is the time to act to protect our coastal ecosystems. For a modest investment we can ensure both eelgrass meadows and rocky habitats can be conserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,