



Oregon Zoo
Together for Wildlife

4001 SW Canyon Road
Portland, OR 97221
503.226.1561
oregonzoo.org

March 4, 2025

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3580

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Zoo and our supporters, I strongly support HB 3580, the *Eelgrass Action* bill.

The Oregon Zoo is committed to marine conservation, advancing coastal species recovery and engaging our 1.3 million annual visitors through our Coastal Shores exhibit to illuminate the critical importance of Oregon's marine ecosystems.

Eelgrass meadows are ecological powerhouses, providing home for myriad species, critical carbon sinks and essential nursery habitats for juvenile fish. They play a pivotal role in sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and providing a natural buffer against the ocean acidification and storm surges. These vital ecosystems are also in decline.

HB 3580 represents a proactive approach to marine conservation by establishing a collaborative taskforce that brings together agencies, Tribal leaders, scientists, and local communities to develop a comprehensive strategy to set meaningful conservation targets. Supporting this legislation will safeguard the vital marine habitats that all Oregonians depend on.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shervin Hess
Conservation Manager
Oregon Zoo