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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
Oregon Legislature

Testimony in support of HB 3587 Relating to Rocky Habitat Management

Submitted by Dick Vander Schaaf, Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director

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

As Associate Coast and Marine Conservation Director of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Oregon, **I am pleased to write in support of HB 3587, the Rocky Habitat Stewardship Bill.**

Oregon's iconic rocky habitats constitute 41% of our 362-mile coastline; providing critical nesting habitat to over one million nesting seabirds and hundreds of fish species, supporting productive kelp beds, and are home for thousands of invertebrate species including sea stars, anemones, and shellfish. From iconic Haystack Rock to the numerous majestic sea stacks and rock arches off Oregon's beautiful south coast, rocky habitats also attract millions of visitors and recreationists each year, providing economic benefits to coastal communities. It is essential that we protect and conserve these habitats for both people and nature.

As a science-based, non-partisan organization, TNC has been actively involved with the conservation of Oregon's rocky habitats for nearly 20 years. In 2006, TNC led an extensive mapping and prioritization effort that found rocky habitats are a critical habitat for conservation action (see the [Pacific Northwest Coast Ecoregional Assessment](#)¹). Recently, TNC participated in the Task Force established by the Oregon Policy Advisory Council to update the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy, Part 3 of the Territorial Sea Plan of Oregon (2017-2021). The Task Force conducted a significant update to Part 3 and developed a process for new sites to be evaluated and incorporated into the Plan.

HB 3587 is the next step in supporting rocky habitats by providing funds for plan implementation and management of these new and existing designated sites and supporting community groups to build their volunteer and community science programs to steward and

¹ Vander Schaaf, D., G. Wilhere, Z. Ferdaña, K. Popper, M. Schindel, P. Skidmore, D. Rolph, P. Iachetti, G. Kittel, R. Crawford, D. Pickering, and J. Christy. 2006. *Pacific Northwest Coast Ecoregion Assessment*. Prepared by The Nature Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Nature Conservancy, Portland, Oregon.

manage their sites. Without this bill, these new sites could become “paper parks” with no meaningful implementation.

Rocky habitats are critically important to both people and nature as they support tremendous biodiversity at our coast and are a primary draw for visitors that bring millions of dollars to the coast annually. TNC has been a long-time proponent of protecting and conserving these essential habitats, and we hope you will support this bill. We thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and urge you to move this bill forward this session.