

Submitter: Alenna Sebben

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

Dear Co-chair Helm, Co-chair Owens and members of the committee, I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3580, and our very important eelgrass meadows. This bill NOT ONLY offer a great opportunity to support biodiversity, coastal economies, and increase resilience to a changing climate, but are part of a necessary pivot to preserving the last vestiges of natural places which keep our system (Earth) going. It's a precarious time – in fact the pivot point may have been years ago. But here we are in the final hours of our ability to make a difference for life on Earth.

Eelgrass Meadows: Biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks, nursery habitat and absolutely vital for sustaining our fisheries, maintaining water quality, and buffering against climate impacts. There are signs these essential habitats are in decline in Oregon. This is bad for humans and everything else - and it will not get better by ignoring it. HB 3580 would set up a Taskforce to set conservation targets through a collaborative effort involving agencies, Tribes, scientists, local communities, and others. This bill is the first essential step to proactively prevent habitat loss before it's too late.

Costs? If we do not pass this, cascading costs will seem miniscule in comparison to what we will lose if we don't do anything. We need to understand that to keep our life on Earth we are past the time to protect it, so please let's get going and think about what we are taking from future generations if we don't. Now is the time to act to protect our coastal ecosystems. This is a modest investment, pennies for what we will preserve and even gain.

For the future,
Alenna Sebben