

Submitter: Jay Withgott

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 Committee members:

I write to urge your support for HB 3580. This bill will help conserve one of Oregon's most important coastal habitats for biodiversity and fisheries, while supporting tourism, recreation, and coastal economies.

Eelgrass beds are one of the most underappreciated yet productive coastal resources we have. Underwater meadows of eelgrass sequester carbon, buffer shorelines against storm surges, cleanse water, and act as nurseries for juvenile fish vital to fisheries. Yet eelgrass meadows are declining and we need better, area-specific, information on how to reverse these declines. The modest investment that HB 3580 proposes will go a long way toward achieving well-informed, targeted, and effective strategies for conservation of this vital habitat in our state.

HB 3580, together with HB 3587 on rocky coastal habitat, offer effective means to protect and restore biodiversity, keep our shorelines healthy, and support coastal economies.

Thank you for your support.

Jay Withgott
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