

**Haley Hudson**  
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**Re: HB3580 (Support)**

Dear Co-Chair Helms, Co-Chair Owens and members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the Eelgrass Action Bill, HB 3580. My name is Haley Hudson, and I am a marine scientist pursuing my doctorate at Oregon State University, where my research focuses on ocean chemistry and ecology. During my time in Oregon, I have developed a deep appreciation for the unique richness of the Oregon Coast, both as a researcher and a recreational enthusiast. I am submitting testimony on behalf of myself.

In my work, I collaborate directly with Dungeness crab fishermen to track low-oxygen "dead zones," which have become more frequent due to climate change. These dead zones threaten the sustainability of this critical fishery, the most lucrative single-species fishery in the state, and the livelihoods that depend on it. Eelgrass provides a vital refuge and nursery for Dungeness crab, making it essential to protect these ecosystems for the benefit of coastal communities, the economy, and the environment.

In addition to serving as a nursery for Dungeness crab, eelgrass provides essential habitat, food, and environmental services for culturally and recreationally important species in Oregon, including juvenile salmon, rockfish, and herring. Eelgrass also helps protect fish and shellfish from low pH caused by ocean acidification, another growing consequence of climate change on the Oregon Coast.

In the face of growing threats to our coast, such as ocean deoxygenation and acidification, eelgrass offers a natural solution to mitigating climate change. Eelgrass stores 35 times more carbon than tropical rainforests, but when these meadows degrade, that carbon is released back into the atmosphere. Even with restoration efforts, it can take thousands of years to store the equivalent amount of carbon that was lost. This is why protecting existing eelgrass meadows is both urgent and essential.

With HB 3580, Oregon has an opportunity to invest in assessing and protecting these vital ecosystems and our fisheries-dependent coastal economy. A collaborative task force is essential for identifying areas most at risk and prioritizing them for protection or restoration. This action will safeguard eelgrass, preserve its climate benefits, and ensure the long-term health of Oregon's coastal economy. I urge you to support the passage of HB 3580.

Sincerely,



Haley Hudson