



March 5, 2025

Rep. Ken Helm and Rep. Mark Owens

Co-Chairs, House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: HB 3580 Support

Co-Chairs Ken Helm and Mark Owens and Honorable of the Committee

On behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's Oregon chapter network and our thousands of members and supporters across the state, we strongly support HB 3580. Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots, nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches through a powerful activist network. Eelgrass habitats are vital to the health of Oregon's coastal environment, playing a critical role in supporting marine biodiversity, improving water quality, and stabilizing shorelines. As recreational ocean and estuary users, we recognize that eelgrass meadows help sustain important fisheries and marine life as well as play a significant role in sequestering carbon and supporting coastal resilience.

Eelgrass provides essential habitat for many commercially and ecologically important species, such as Dungeness crab, salmon, and herring, all of which are important cornerstones of Oregon's marine economy, commercial and recreational industries. Further, eelgrass meadows also serve as a powerful tool in fighting climate change by sequestering carbon and buffering shorelines from erosion and sea level rise. These ecosystem services are crucial to maintaining the health and resilience of our coastal communities. However, eelgrass is under increasing threat from habitat degradation, pollution, and development pressures.

HB 3580 takes an important step toward protecting and restoring these vital habitats by ensuring better planning, monitoring, and coordination in establishing eelgrass conservation efforts. The task force approach of HB 3580 provides ample opportunity for the state to engage in such efforts the Oregon way -engaging stakeholders such as conservation, industry and recreation along with tribes and state agencies.

We urge the committee to pass HB 3580 to protect and restore Oregon's eelgrass meadows, ensuring they continue to provide critical ecological and economic benefits for generations to come. Oregon's coastal heritage depends on the health of our marine ecosystems, and proactive eelgrass conservation will strengthen our state's resilience to climate change while supporting sustainable fisheries and recreation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Plybon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charlie" and last name "Plybon" clearly legible.

Charlie Plybon , Senior Oregon Policy Manager

Surfrider Foundation

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