



March 12, 2025

Subject: Written Testimony in Support of HB 2969

Dear Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Diehl, Vice-Chair Isadore, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2969 and its forward-thinking approach to maximizing the value of Oregon's fisheries. On behalf of the South Coast Development Council (SCDC), I urge you to vote yes on this bill to advance sustainable economic development, reduce waste, and expand opportunities for coastal businesses.

At SCDC, our mission is to foster business growth, job creation, and economic vitality along the South Coast. Our new business incubator targets blue economy tenants—an area of vast, yet underutilized potential that HB 2969 directly supports. By embracing the 100 Percent Fish model, we can strengthen Oregon's fishing industry while simultaneously developing new markets for fish byproducts that are currently discarded.

Each year, Oregon's seafood processing plants generate significant amounts of byproducts, much of which has the potential to be repurposed into valuable products rather than being discarded. Iceland's Ocean Cluster has demonstrated that through strategic research and innovation, these byproducts can be transformed into high-value products such as fish leather, cosmetics, nutraceuticals, and pharmaceuticals. HB 2969 positions Oregon as a leader in sustainable fisheries innovation, setting a new standard for maximizing our natural resources.

This initiative is a win-win for Oregon's coastal economy. It will:

- Create new entrepreneurial opportunities for small businesses.
- Generate jobs and stimulate private investment.
- Boost local economies by diversifying revenue streams.
- Reduce environmental impact by minimizing waste.
- Enhance regulatory compliance and ensure the long-term sustainability of our fisheries.

The proposed \$800,000 appropriation to the Oregon Coast Visitors Association is a critical investment in the necessary infrastructure, research, and development to turn this vision into reality. This is not just about waste reduction, it's about innovation, economic resilience, and securing the future of Oregon's seafood industry.

HB 2969 presents a transformative opportunity to modernize Oregon's fisheries, support small businesses, and build a more sustainable and prosperous coastal economy. I urge you to vote yes on this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lexie Woodward'.

Lexie Woodward, PCED, CEcD
Executive Director

