Safeguard fisheries & coastal communities

Support the Eelgrass Action Bill (HB 3580)

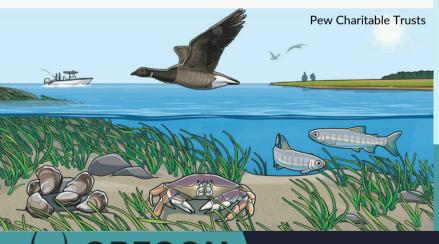
What?

What does the Eelgrass Action Bill do?

 Funds the Department of Land Conservation and Development to convene an Eelgrass Task Force of agencies, scientists, Tribes, and stakeholders (\$400K)

What will the Task Force do?

- Assess the status of eelgrass in Oregon's estuaries and recommend conservation and restoration targets for the state to meet by 2040
- Evaluate policy barriers and environmental challenges to effective eelgrass management and conservation
- Assess state monitoring and mapping programs and recommend improvements
- Identify research needs and information gaps
- Identify funding needs and sources to improve eelgrass management
- Make recommendations to the legislature



Why?

Why does eelgrass matter?

- It supports fisheries, worth over \$178 million per year, by providing nursery habitat for juvenile fish
- It increases resilience, by sequestering carbon (35x the rate of rainforests), dampening storm surges, and buffering ocean acidification
- It improves ecosystem health, by supporting biodiversity and improving water quality

Why this bill?

- **Eelgrass is disappearing** globally and there are signs that its declining in Coos Bay and Yaquina Bay
- We don't know the status of eelgrass meadows in Oregon due to infrequent monitoring
- Threats to eelgrass are increasing, including pollution, development, warming waters, and invasive species
- We need coordinated action, targets, and a plan to protect this resource before it's too late!

The Eelgrass Action Bill is the first step for Oregon to develop a meaningful strategy for eelgrass conservation

<u>Want to learn more or take action?</u> Contact: Annie Merrill, Co-Chair, annie@oregonshores.org Visit: www.oregonoceanalliance.org