

February 3, 2016

To: Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Re: SB 1517

This is a "KILL COASTAL AGRICULTURE BILL"!

The bill adds complexity to a process that needs to be simplified, it does not address the central issue which is the associated funding and permitting processes that will meet fish passage criteria and allow for the timely maintenance, repair and upgrading of the infrastructure (culverts, tide gates, and berms) needed to protect our tidal influenced Ag land. The alternative is the default situation of infrastructure failure with reversion to unmanaged wetlands and the associated unintended consequences. Lawyers and bureaucrats will be enabled to delay and extend approval of projects for years and counties lack the resources to properly deal with the issue.

The working landscapes concept with a compatible restoration component seems to be the preferred alternative to satisfy both the fish passage criteria and the NOAA/NMFS Section 7 ESA Consultation necessary to maintain our coastal infrastructure. The reality is that if we don't address the funding and permitting issues associated with the infrastructure the land use issue is meaningless. For instance, what does an increase in the DSL fill or removal maximum to 100 yards annually do for the process when the Federal fill and removal maximum amount without a permit is 0 yards.

This issue has been before two legislative sessions (2013 & 2015) and the recommendation has been to create a forum for the stakeholders to define the problems and propose comprehensive solutions. This has not yet happened. It is ill advised to attempt to jam this bill though without stakeholder input and proposed solutions that resolves the issues on a statewide basis. I would suggest that we slow down, take a deep breath, and initiate an Oregon Solutions process to deal with this issue.

Sincerely,



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