



37 stakeholders from Oregon Coast and beyond show overwhelming support for local seafood

Oregonians: ‘Let’s keep more local seafood local!’

About 38 pieces of testimony from 37 individuals representing coastal businesses are saying that keeping more Oregon seafood local is in their communities’ best interest. Thus, they are showing their full support House Bill 2909. The content of that bill has been rolled over into [HB 3410](#), the complete Rural Economic Development Package.

Individuals representing companies from Astoria to the Brookings-Harbor area near the California border took time to speak out on this important investment that would help develop small-scale processing opportunities, provide resources to kickstart mariculture operations near Bandon and create a GIS system to identify shovel-ready small-scale seafood industry development sites.

A wide variety of 37 coastal partners [testified](#) in support of the original bill, including workforce investment board professionals, chamber of commerce leaders and economic developers. The coalition included seafood harvesters, sellers, preparers/chefs, college instructors, food and beverage producers and servers. Individuals also wrote in from Portland, Bend and other parts of the state. They depend on what the Oregon Coast has in the way of seafood. Participants also spoke highly of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association, the organization that would ultimately invest the \$1.19 million.

These hard-working folks – all of whom earn some portion of their income and livelihood from the sea’s bounty – were unified in a message that they can do a lot more with resources that can be shared. These include cold storage, a mobile processing unit and better access to locations where they can develop their businesses. They understand the need for local, sustainable seafood for the benefits of public health, a cleaner environment and job creation. This is a pioneering group of Oregonians, and the sea is their prairie where they sustain themselves. Hear for yourself some of the highlights, listed below:

It’s good for the economy!

Susannah Montague, JoElles Fish and Chips LLC (Newport): Without affordable cold storage and resources (Yaquina Lab and OCVA) provide, I literally could not have even opened my business, let alone find the success that I have. I own a food cart that serves sustainably caught seafood to the working people of the Central Oregon coast year round, not just to tourists during summers.”

Brett Montague, Seal Rock: “We need continued investment from ... to help us

because it will allow us to have more opportunities to market our own product and bring seafood directly from our boat to the consumer. Please help small coastal fishing communities, we need all the help we can get!”

Bob Neroni, EVOO Cannon Beach: “We need the investment ... because it will create more jobs in the coastal community; create new opportunities for training a diverse workforce and keep local dollars working locally by keeping larger amounts of the ‘catch’ on the coast and in the state.”

Eryn R. Domeyer, Tre-Fin Day Boat: “Cold storage on the coast is limited and costly. Increased access to cold storage will be beneficial to Tre-Fin and other fishermen and fish processors allowing us to provide local seafood year around.”

Oregon’s Pioneers, at Sea!

Sara Hauman, Tiny Fish Co.: “As a woman owned operation, there are unfortunately many mountains to climb while navigating the realm of a male dominated industry. ... It is with Tiny Fish Co. that I work to bring the increasing need to choose a more sustainable and diverse food option to a national audience.”

Brenda Vassau, Low Tide Farms: “We need to create access for local businesses to source local seafoods from our coastal regions. Facilities for processing, storing and distributing this local seafood are a must in order to keep our communities flourishing through sound business decisions regarding our regional food systems.”

Chantelle Hylton, Wheeler restaurateur: “We have photos hanging on the walls of the restaurant from a century ago when a family could make a good living from just one boat. I've been hard pressed to source enough seafood for the restaurant, as many of the fishers have established relationships where all of their catch goes to the big buyers and is shipped out of state - not by choice but because they have no other option - no infrastructure, no support, often no hope.”

William Goergen, Catalyst Seafood Co. (Brookings): “Investment from HB 2909 (now HB 3410) will help us move forward as a small seafood business, an industry typically dominated by the large players in the processing and sales portion of our industry. More ‘Mom and Pops’ style businesses are

much needed to help get out of the iron grip of these Seafood Giants.”

A Relationship of Trust!

Rachelle Hacmac, Winter Waters (Portland): “Through partnership with OCVA, I have helped create Winter Waters, an Oregon-based regenerative seafare series taking place in the month of February. We have over 30 chefs and bartenders in Portland and the Oregon coast participating in the series, using locally farmed seaweed and Oregon seafood in unique dining applications. The goal of the dining series is to draw attention to the blue economy, supply chain, and local seafood systems, in an effort to support local fishermen and farmers.”

Aaron Longton and Michael Baran, Port Orford Sustainable Seafood: “(Oregon Coast Visitors Association) have been great to work with, and have provided us with the ability to develop a storefront and better serve the food desert that is, Port Orford. ... Through this collaboration our business has been able to provide the local population access to a fresh, value-added product. ... We need the investment ... because it will help us maintain growth, increase the amount of hook and line caught seafood purchased from the fleet and offer the health benefit of the last wild harvested protein.”

Brian Trotter, Rockaway Beach: “As the pandemic, like everyone else, I needed to adapt or fail. Thanks to resources and connections made through people connected with the Oregon Coast Visitors Association I met three additional buyers/processors who were looking for the product I had to offer. I found new businesses to sell my product and that of other fishers. We began consolidating the catch allowing some other small boats to also move their catch.”