

October 4, 2023

TO: Jill Rolfe, Coos County Community Planning Commission

Re: Comments on the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan, Phase 1

I appreciate the effort you and others have made to work to update the current CBEMP and make it available for review and discussion. I look forward to being involved as the plans for a Phase 2 updated CBEMP are undertaken. Below I have included comments that I would like the Planning Commissioners and the Coos County Commissioners to consider in developing the next steps towards implementing Phase 2 of the CBEMP process:

1. The County commit to a Phase 2 update of the CBEMP and actively seek funds to accomplish this task.
2. Moving forward, the County commit to establishing a Citizen Advisory Committee with a diverse membership with significant knowledge of the Coos Bay estuary.
3. Moving forward, the County commit to establishing a Technical Advisory Committee to ensure a thorough and scientific comprehensive process in revising and updating the CBEMP. The information provided in the maps generated by the Partnership for Coastal Watersheds is a significant step towards updating our knowledge of the estuary but is insufficient. Much of the data used for these maps is at least a decade old, or more in many instances. A Technical Advisory Committee would be able to provide updates on many of the information sources and ensure a robust, accurate document.
4. The County carefully consider the role of the staff or commissioners of the Port of Coos Bay on a steering committee or any other committees that the County should appoint. As you are well aware, the recent passage of HB3382 by the Oregon legislature has provided the Port the opportunity to request exception to Goal 16 of the land use regulations for deep draft navigation improvements. This clearly provides a conflict of interest in discussions of future designations of zoning and use of the estuary. It is important to ensure that the Port does not have undue influence on the next phase of the CBEMP process and it is inappropriate for the Port to be co-managers of a Phase 2 CBEMP process or have decision-making or voting authority.

Sincerely,
Jan Hodder, Ph.D.

cc. Michael Howard and Amanda Ferguson, Institute for Policy Research and Engagement
Lisa Phipps, Oregon Coastal Management Program Director
Meg Reed, Oregon Coastal Management Program Coastal Policy Specialist
Hui Rodomsky, Department of Land Conservation and Development South Coast Regional Representative
Chelsea Schnable, City of Coos Bay Planner
Derek Payne, City of North Bend Planner