

February 19, 2023

Jill Rolfe, Coos County Community Development Director  
Coos County Planning Department

Re: AM-22-005

Dear Ms. Rolfe,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Phase 1 of the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan (CBEMP) update.

As a resident of Coos County since 1981, and a property owner in Coos Bay, North Bend, and Bandon, I have a vested interest in decisions made regarding development and protection of our Coastal lands and waterways. As an active participant in providing testimony during public comment periods regarding the defunct Jordan Cove Energy Project, I became keenly aware of the importance of the CBEMP and the Coastal Management Plan in forming responsible, informed planning decisions.

At the same time, I became aware of the challenges presented to many citizens by the outdated format of the maps and what they had to go through in order to access them and evaluate their accuracy. It was a daunting task. Your objective to revise and update the maps as part of Phase 1 is worth celebrating!

With that in mind, I attended the open house on January 7, 2023. My training is as a licensed clinical social worker; understanding governmental policy making and its processes are part of my academic training. So, while I do not have the expertise to evaluate the accuracy of the maps, per se, at that meeting and in subsequent conversations with people who do, it became quickly apparent from that there are numerous vital missing pieces of information regarding the maps. This problem of inaccuracy has surfaced even in the short time allotted for the public to view them.

Please understand that the work completed thus far has been a great step. I was especially appreciative to learn of the objective for all three local governments to commit to one plan. That is a major accomplishment in itself!

However, since the maps will be the foundational tool in the land planning process going forward, it is imperative that they be as accurate and up-to-date as possible. This means creating more opportunity for current public input. It needs to be acknowledged that the initial process was abruptly interrupted due to the pandemic. Yet, it is imperative not to streamline it now in service of expediency as that will undermine the ultimate purpose of the CBEMP update and also, disallow the public involvement required by Goal One of the land use planning process, as I understand it.

Given the above, I ask that a period for public comment and assessment be created to allow for meaningful evaluation and input on the maps. Further, that a draft document be submitted to the

public for comments and revision prior to preparation of a final draft. And that the final draft be presented to the public for comment before it is submitted to the three local governments. rather than after. In my experience, when policies are presented to government officials as “final”, they are poised to approve them rather than scrutinize. Allowing significant opportunity for public involvement would be more in alignment with the intention of Goal 1 and ensure that the foundation of our CBEMP is a solid one.

We are doing this work to be mindful of the sand and its environs, if we continue on the current course without allowing sufficient time for real-time public involvement, metaphorically, our CBEMP will be built on it. I think that would be a bad idea.

Let’s move forward thoughtfully with respect for what has already been accomplished but recognize that what we have actually have is a partially completed initial step, not a final product.

Sincerely,

**Beverly Segner**

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