

January 4, 2024

Dear Coos County, Coos Bay and North Bend Planning Team:

Thank you and all of the public involved for your hard work to try to configure and clarify the work of beginning to address our Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan. This effort was initiated by a contract with consultants as a way to be the first step toward updating the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan.

You as planners and elected officials have heard many of us at hearings talk about our concerns and desire to be engaged as citizens in this process. Many of us have skills that are useful to understanding the function of estuaries and have experience with policy and regulatory affairs. This estuary is of the highest importance, and that is why we are here to engage. We value our community, and we are dependent on a functioning estuary and surrounding environment for our safety and wellbeing.

I have been challenged to keep up with reviewing this past month as I have been provided 2 documents for review in December and then last night when I was still working on review, I received yet another version of these documents that was formatted for official approval on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

I plead with you to PAUSE the approval of this document provided and formatted for approval on January 10. It has many typos and I am concerned about the way it moves many additions into sections where they will no longer be held separately from the 1984 version once the red lines are gone. These additions and corrections are not carefully documented and could cause serious problems in the future interpretation.

Much of my frustration has come from the fact that the consultants that were hired to provide what was rolled out as a digitized easily accessible form of the plan did not really turn out to be such a simply described document. The consulting contractors Mike Howard and Amanda Ferguson provided a detailed report and memo dated May 31, 2023. COOS BAY ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN (CBEMP) REVISIONS (PART 1, PART 2) AND IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCE REVISIONS.

In the time since we have seen the consultants' report, many of us have been concerned about having an adequate review of the documents, and the proposed interpretation of their suggestions and overt changes made to the document.

Of particular concern to me is that in the detailed report, the interpretations and decisions suggested have been provided by staff except when we have been able to review and point out discrepancies. This is an enormous document, and going through it thoroughly takes time. I believe decisions for changes or substitutions need a careful dialog regarding interpretation of any proposed changes.

Fortunately, many of the most serious concerns have been headed by you the planners. For example, their recommendation that we remove many components of the original plan CBEMP Part 2 and the Data Source and replace them with more recent information. Many of us objected that this was not something that was wise to

do. Thank you for changing that recommendation from their letter, and also removing the changes in committee structure that were inserted.

By the same logic, the process of review and response provided only in hearings does not satisfy the need for a careful review by citizens in a work group. We have not been invited and provided with time to sit and work through this enormous document in a detailed manner. Instead, we independently review it and then comment. This is inefficient and also frustrating for you I am sure. I fully support Mr. Graybill's approach to this provided in his testimony statements regarding how to make this work appropriately. I urge you to accept this option.

In reviewing this proposed edited version, I have a serious concerns question as to how to structure a document that has added sections to the existing historical document but is editing selected components. Right now, there are redlines in the document, and highlights of areas for changes, but after approval this will not be clear.

Can we have some council from historical experts as to how to capture this appropriately? I know that when codes are changed there are numerous footnotes provided with details. We need a template for this so that we know what has been inserted and what remains the same.

At the last hearing I testified about the importance of retaining all the original background material that supported the lineation of the management units, and decision regarding use. This is essential especially when we move toward a full revision that provides the context for those uses.

As an example of some of my concern regarding the proposed changes begin even at the title page of our original 1984 document. They are confusing. The new date on page Volume II Part 1 Section 1 Page 1 reads: COOS BAY ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN ~~2019~~2024 REVISION  
Part 1 - Plan Provisions

Then the plan goes on to provide the former data and members that created this document. I think having all the other names of the first iteration is especially important as this is supposed to only be a digitalized version, so why are we renaming and dating it and not putting a clear amendment notation as to what this is?

Similarly, when the names of an agency are changed, it is not correct to change the names on the archival portions of this document. For example, page 5 has Oregon Division of State Lands and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Leave those as those are appropriate to the time that this was prepared.

In some other documents there has been a preamble with table of locations of such name changes to show them in portions of the review process. However, some changes are just made to portions of this document. This document is the legal guidance for our management. We need to be certain of how to frame amendments to this, as it is a full revision as you clearly indicate. So how do we provide this

clearly and with the details that are needed so that it is not contested in court or otherwise?

I understand the frustration with our County and City planners with how long this has taken. However, I disagree with the summary of the findings of the process during this past year when it is stated that these open public meetings held in the spring satisfied the elements of public involvement. As someone outside of the planning department, this process has not provided a serious interactive involvement. We provide comments, and it puts us in an adversarial back and forth instead of providing valuable input. We get back a response from planners with their interpretation of the findings. There is no rebuttal or discussion. There has been no independent entity acting to resolve or discuss these in a collaborative process.

Even with one of the solutions to appoint committees via a resolution, the resolution provided last night does not indicate what and how these groups will use for process and how they will interact.

I again thank you but plead with you to PAUSE the approval of this document and appoint a working committee of concerned citizens to go line by line and consult with experts as to the methods to provide clearly and codify the changes suggested.

Sincerely,



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