Graham Golbuff

As much as 80% of estuary habitat in Washington State has been lost and much of what remains is threatened by rising ocean levels. We must allow shorelines and estuaries to naturally migrate inland as sea levels rise.

+ Prohibit new buildings—and the repair or replacement of existing ones—in areas vulnerable to sea level rise.
+ Restrict hard shoreline stabilization (like armoring) as a last resort, and then only allow it above the long-term future ordinary high-water mark.
+ Expand shoreline jurisdiction into adjoining flood plains and critical areas so that SMP rules can be applied beyond the standard 200 ft limit.
+ Include climate change in critical area standards and account for sea level rise and changing hydrology, including the landward migration of wetlands and critical saltwater habitats.

No net loss has been a fundamental principle in shoreline management since 2003 but is not working. Significant shoreline environmental function has been lost since then and losses continue today.

+ Account for sea level rise when evaluating and planning for no net loss requirements.
+ Track all actions, authorized and unauthorized, and include them in no net loss and in cumulative impact evaluations.
+ Require that mitigation succeeds by measuring performance with annual reports submitted to the local government and transmitted to the Department of Ecology.

Enforcement needs to be strengthened. For example, 85% of new shoreline armoring installed in Island County between 2016 and 2023 was unpermitted.

+ Mandate enforcement by clearly specifying the exact circumstances under which a local government must enforce its SMP.
+ Require the removal of any hard shoreline stabilization or structures built without approval.
+ Require performance and maintenance bonds for all environmental mitigation projects to ensure long-term accountability.