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RE: Support for HB 3132 (submitted via hnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Dear Chairman Witt and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources:

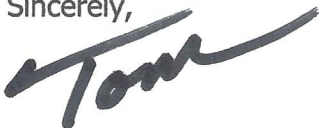
I write in support of HB 3132 enabling ODFW to authorize voluntary stream restoration and habitat improvement projects through construction of environmental restoration weirs.

As an eastern Oregon rancher, I have seen first-hand at Silvies Valley Ranch the habitat restoration benefits as provided by weirs and artificial beaver dams which have enabled the conversion of degraded dryland sagebrush and juniper encroached rangelands back to natural riparian and wetland meadow ecosystems critical for supporting the healthy habitat needs of a variety of wildlife species (sage-grouse, other birds, native fish, deer and elk). Additionally, HB 3132's authority provides important conservation actions for mitigating land erosion, riparian degradation, floodplain restoration, and for developing important fire breaks needed in watershed areas.

In my home of Harney County our ranching and agricultural community have a demonstrated history working collaboratively with state departments and federal agencies on a variety of environmental and species protection issues ranging from Greater Sage-Grouse CCAA conservation agreements, Wildland Fire Protection, Harney Basin Water Collaborative, and most recently with ODFW concerning Malheur Lake Red Band Trout protection. HB 3132 will provide important new conservation action capabilities benefiting all of these efforts important to Harney County and other eastern Oregon counties.

On behalf of Oregon ranchers and our agricultural communities of eastern Oregon, I urge the House Natural Resources Committee's support of HB 3132.

Sincerely,



Tom Sharp, Harney County Rancher
Chair, Harney County Sage-Grouse CCAA Steering Committee
Chair, Oregon Cattlemen's Association ESA Committee
Chair, Oregon Cattlemen's Association Fire Assistance Committee
President-elect, Oregon Cattlemen's Association