

We live in a state that was literally built on the back of beavers. The first colony in Oregon was built for the purpose of exporting beaver pelts. But it's not just our past that we owe to the Beaver, it's also our future. Beaver are a vital component for Oregon's ecological health, and can provide Oregonians with vast positive benefits, including:

—Increased wildfire resilience (through natural and effective firebreaks and post-fire habitat);

—Increased water security through wetlands and ponds storing surface and groundwater;

—Carbon capture and storage that helps remove carbon from the atmosphere;

Improved drinking water quality and stream temperatures;

—Rearing habitat for multiple imperiled salmonid species.

—The bill encourages beaver presence on the landscape to create an atmosphere where Oregon sees more benefits from increased, and more widely-distributed beaver populations in Oregon.

—The bill removes the predatory animal status for beaver, which allows Oregon's wildlife experts, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, to manage beaver everywhere in Oregon as it does for the vast majority of wildlife in Oregon, including deer, elk, black bear, wolves, raccoons, fish, and others.

—The bill encourages the use of non-lethal co-existence tools to prevent beaver-related property and infrastructure damage.

—The bill does not remove any tools from the toolbox for landowners in Oregon, as lethal removal of beaver is still an option.

—The bill returns wildlife management to Oregon's wildlife experts at ODFW, without precluding the Oregon Department of Agriculture from working with landowners to protect their property, crops, and infrastructure.

We live in the Beaver State, let's pay the beaver the respect it deserves, and pass this bill.