

Date: March 18, 2021
Re: Support for HB 2844

Chair Witt, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

As a public health advocate and concerned resident of the Beaver State, I am writing to request your support for HB 2844. Beavers are not only the symbol of our state, but a key species for ecosystem health. This bill is a good start in our responsibility to share the land with these important animals.

Protection for beavers is not a question of urban vs. rural conflict, but a step we all can take together to achieve interlocking goals:

- . protect water quality,
- . fight drought,
- . preserve natural resources,
- . protect habitat for fish and wildlife.

With wildfires threatening our state more every year, it is urgent that we protect the wetland habitats that beavers create - wetlands that in turn help protect our communities from wildfire.

The focus of this bill on federal lands makes sense. Our public lands are where our water comes from, and beavers help restore streams to maximal health. We know the benefits of beavers to our natural resources, and federal staff know how to manage beaver habitat appropriately.

The time for this bill is now: the urgency of climate change and declining salmon runs make this the year to act. Beavers are a unique animal deserving of special protection, because of their important role in helping other species, including those important to hunting and fishing.

Oregon needs beavers. I urge you to support HB 2844. Thank you for your service for the people of this state.

Sincerely,
Audrey Zunkel deCoursey