



Testimony to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee on HB 2844

David Moskowitz, Executive Director on March 17, 2021

The Conservation Angler supports HB 2844 and urges a work session and subsequent passage.

HB 2844 removes the predatory animal status for beaver, which allows Oregon's wildlife experts, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), to manage beaver everywhere in Oregon as it must do for most wildlife including deer, elk, black bear, wolves, raccoons, fish, and others.

HB 2844 encourages the use of non-lethal co-existence tools to prevent beaver-related property and infrastructure damage. It does not remove any tools from the toolbox for landowners in Oregon, as lethal removal of beaver remains an option.

HB 2944 returns wildlife management to Oregon's wildlife experts without precluding the OR Department of Agriculture from working with landowners to protect their property, crops, and infrastructure.

Proposed amendments will remove beaver from predatory animal status in Oregon allowing ODFW to manage beaver everywhere they occur in Oregon (a change in the management regime) and it will end the current presumption that beaver on your private property are causing damage (even if they are not actually doing so).

If passed, ODFW would – through rulemaking – address:

- a. needed regulatory changes resulting from this legislative status revision of beaver's status,
- b. require all beaver take to be reported,
- c. to consider ways to prioritize and encourage use of co-existence tools before moving to lethal removal,
- d. require greater specificity in terms of the location of beaver take (at watershed or sub-watershed level), and
- e. develop emergency procedures allowing landowners to address actively occurring property/infrastructure damage without acquiring a permit from ODFW in advance.

TCA supports HB 2844 because beaver are a vital component for Oregon's ecological health, and will provide Oregonians with vast positive benefits, including:

- Increased wildfire resilience (through natural and effective firebreaks which post-fire recovery).
- 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 lower stream temperatures and more natural flow regimes.
- Rearing habitat for multiple imperiled salmonid species.
- That beaver presence on the landscape will create visible opportunities where Oregon will see the benefits of increased, and more widely distributed beaver populations around the state.

TCA urges the Committee to act on HB 2844 so Oregon can begin to see the ecological benefits of more beaver on the landscape, address the intersection of wildfire and beaver, and provide people with co-existence tools to prevent beaver-caused property and infrastructure damage before it occurs.

Few, if any, states allow the unlicensed killing of their state animal – it is time to reform that practice.

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