



Date: March 18, 2021
To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Re: Opposition to HB 2844

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Hudson, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), representing Oregon's 36 county governments, I am writing to you today in opposition of HB 2844, legislation that would greatly limit the ability to manage problem beavers.

Oregon counties are responsible for the largest share of Oregon's public road system. County roads are a critical component of Oregon's integrated road system and counties own and maintain the largest share with over 32,000 miles under county jurisdiction (41 percent of Oregon's public road system). While counties recognize that beavers are an important species in Oregon's landscape and ecosystem, they are also notorious for creating challenges for our county infrastructure. Beavers can cause extensive damage; their dams block culverts and wash out critical roads. Our members rely on the ability to efficiently remove beavers to avoid the significant damage that can result from their overabundance in certain parts of the state.

Currently, in the event of a problem beaver, a county road department can quickly remove the beaver and undergo any necessary repairs. The process to remove a known beaver that is causing damage to our infrastructure comes with many costs: debris removal, repairs, clean-up, and traffic control. Those costs only increase the longer it takes to remove the beaver and begin repairs.

HB 2844 does not allow for the agility needed to manage beavers when they become an issue to our critical county infrastructure. It will require getting a permit from ODFW and non-lethal deterrence as outlined in the bill. There is no ability in the bill as written to expedite this process if there is a beaver whose dam is causing jeopardy to county property or flooding roadways. Our county road programs need the ability to manage predatory species as needed to protect Oregon's road system – the state should not eliminate tools and add additional time and costs that would prevent counties' ability to ensure a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system to connect people and support our economy.

We respectfully request you oppose HB 2844.

Sincerely,

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