



**Date:** March 18, 2021

**To:** Representative Witt and House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

**From:** Dr. Tim Elder - Wild Salmon Center

**Re:** Support for HB 2844

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

I am writing today on behalf of Wild Salmon Center in support of House Bill 2844 (HB 2844). Wild Salmon Center works in salmon strongholds throughout Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alaska and the Russian Far East. While there are numerous causes for the last 150 years of salmon declines, in Oregon, one of the easiest ways to improve freshwater conditions for salmon is to allow beaver to move, reproduce and create pools within our landscape. Almost everything that these ecosystem engineers do has a positive effect for salmon populations. From connecting rivers with their floodplains, catching and retaining sediment, to creating the pools essential for threatened coho salmon survival, beavers' engineering of riverine systems is a vital component of Oregon's natural ecosystems. Annually, millions of federal dollars are spent to improve salmon habitat by adding large wood structures and beaver dam analogs (man-made beaver dams) into Pacific Northwest rivers to mimic what beavers do for free. Additionally, beavers can increase wildfire resilience, increase water storage above ground, speed groundwater recharge, and sequester and store carbon. These are truly remarkable creatures.

HB 2844 will remove the predatory animal distinction and allow wildlife experts and the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to manage these animals. This new designation and recognition of the beneficial effects of beavers will not be at the expense of agriculture, nor will it tie the hands of landowners experiencing unresolvable beaver related issues. Where non-lethal options for dealing with problem beavers are unsuccessful, landowners would still be able to use lethal controls through the proposed permitting process. Wild Salmon Center strongly believes that humans and beavers can not only co-exist but, in fact, thrive together.

Best Regards,

Dr. Tim Elder  
Southwest Oregon Program Manager  
Wild Salmon Center

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