

Submitter: Josephine Hawthorne
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure: HB3464

I am Josephine Hawthorne. I am writing in support of HB 3464 which would remove beavers from the classification of “predatory animals” under existing Oregon statutes. This designation allows for the unlimited killing of beavers without permits and without tracking of the numbers of beavers killed. Beavers are critical players in protecting our environment as Oregon faces the significant challenges of climate change. Beavers create wetlands and wet meadows that provide habitat for salmon and other species and that sequester carbon. Studies have shown that the wetlands and ponds created by beavers serve as natural firebreaks and habitat protection during wildfires. The benefits provided by beavers in creating and preserving wetlands and meadows far outweigh any benefit from their predation. Beavers are a uniquely valuable species that can assist humans in fighting the adverse effects of climate change caused not by beavers but by us.

HB3464 allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to manage beaver on private land, as it does other wildlife species. HB 3464 prompts the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a system for beaver management and removal on private lands. That would enable ODFW to remove problem beavers creating a nuisance for a landowner and to place them in areas where their activities are beneficial. This is better alternative than simply killing the beavers. HB3464 also allows ODFW and the Commission to promote the use of non-lethal tools for beaver management before resorting to killing them by: setting standards for the removal of beaver; creating a system for reporting beaver removals in Oregon; requiring landowners to report beaver killings to ODFW so that the state can study the effects of removal on the landscape and wildfire prevention. These are reasonable measures for the management of a species whose present and potential benefits for the environment outweigh their harmful effects to a landowner, especially where the animals can be relocated to areas where they can work for us rather than be killed by us. I urge you to support HB 3464.

Josephine Hawthorne