



KLAMATH IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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22 March 2023

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Chair Pam Marsh
Vice-Chairs Bobby and Emerson Levy
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in opposition to House Bill 3464

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Levy and Levy,

Klamath Irrigation District (District) is in opposition to HB 3464, which would increase the potential for loss of human life and result in millions of dollars in property damage.

Klamath Irrigation District is a special government district operated under Oregon Revised Statute 545. The district is responsible for operating and maintaining over 400 miles of earthen embankments in Klamath and Modoc Counties which support the foundation of our economy. Nine miles of this earthen canal system sit above the city of Klamath Falls; a failure of this system would take human life and result in billions of dollars in damages.

Klamath Irrigation District's integrated pest management plan (IPMP) coordinated through the Bureau of Reclamation, requires the management of "predatory animals" as defined in ORS 610.02 to prevent damages to the earthen canal structures which could result in failure. Photographs of canal bank failures caused by "predatory animal" activity are provided in Attachment A.

As written, HB 3464 eliminates a critical component of the District's IPMP to prevent loss of human life and property damage, creates conditions in which the District does not have alternative means of management, increases costs beyond a reasonable measure as it eliminates the ability to perform routine maintenance when beavers are present and interfering with the operation and maintenance of an irrigation canal. Therefore, the District must object to the language presented in the bill for concerns of the safety of our communities in addition to the real and evident creation of future property damage.


Gene Souza

Executive Director and District Manager
Klamath Irrigation District

Attachment A _ Photographs of irrigation infrastructure failure caused by “predatory animals”.

Canal break caused by a predatory animal above a local high school. This break resulted in damages to school property; the damage was identified and repaired prior to impairing school functions.



A routine canal break caused by predatory animals resulting in property / crop damage.

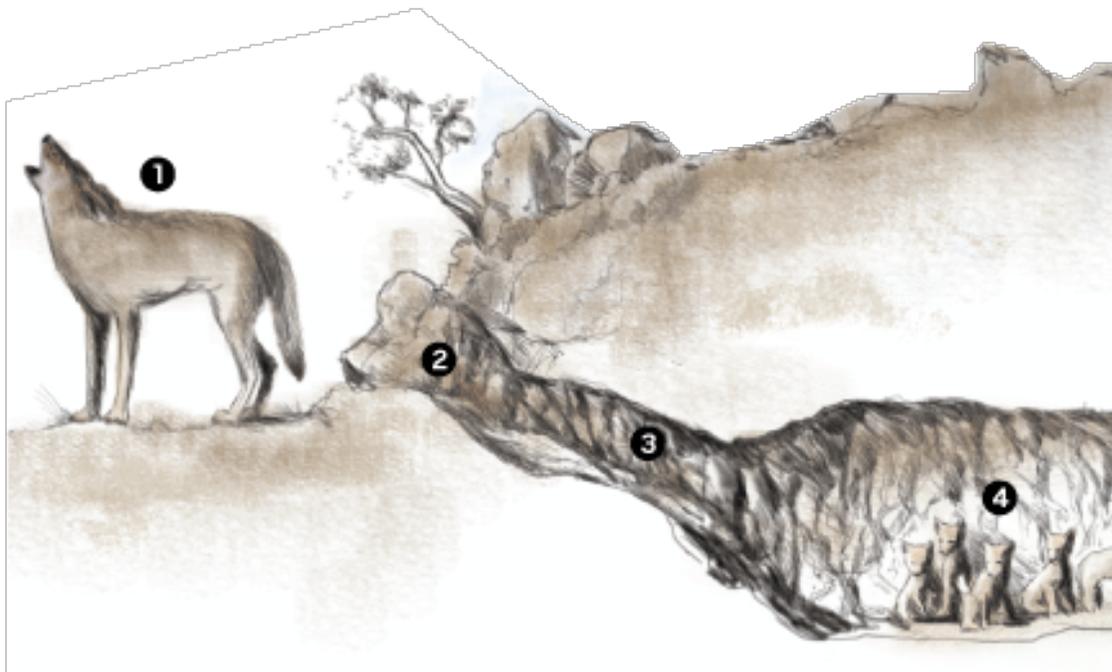


“Predatory animals” actively attack the irrigation infrastructure with in the District.

Badgers create large holes and dens inside the canal banks creating voids. A badger colony has established itself in several locations within the District which require active and routine management actions by District staff to prevent loss of life or property.



Coyotes often attempt to create dens on the canal infrastructure. Coyotes dens create large voids and weaken canal infrastructure.



Yellow Bellied Marmots are active across the District with huge infestations in the urban areas. Management of this threat is an on-going battle with limited resources in urban areas. A Yellow Bellied Marmot gestation period is 30 days with 3-8 pups per litter.



Muskrats also actively burrow into the side of canal banks to establish their dens.

