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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB3464

How do beavers help with climate change?

Beaver-built ponds, wetlands, and wet meadows hold water in storage and slowly release it, helping to offset declines in stream flows and water quality related to declining snowpack and spring melt. Beaver activity helps ease climate induced drought, such as the recent persistent drought we have experienced in southwest Oregon.

How do beavers help with wildfires?

Beavers create and maintain wetlands, wet meadows, and ponds, which are natural fire breaks. These areas provide refuge for livestock and wildlife during fires, and this habitat is critical to helping wildlife survive the winter. Because vegetation remains, these areas trap soil eroding from surrounding hillsides post-wildfire and prevent it from reaching streams which protects water quality.

How do beavers help native fish?

Beavers create habitat that improves the function and diversity of the biological and physical systems native fish need to thrive. Ponds provide critical winter rearing habitat for juvenile Coho salmon. Ponds and wetlands temporarily store surface and groundwater which later contribute to cooler stream temperatures. Currently, the Department of Environmental Quality has identified more than 89,000 miles of streams as too warm to support native fish. The work of beavers improves riparian conditions resulting in greater vegetation and insect life which enhances food sources for native fish.

How do beavers help farmers, ranchers, cities, and towns?

Farmers and ranchers need water to grow crops and raise livestock. Cities and towns need dependable high-quality water, and drinking water for many Oregonians come from our forests. Beaver-created habitats temporarily store water in ponds and in the

ground, which is then slowly and sustainably released. Because the ponds create conditions that allow for regular groundwater recharge, benefits are maintained over time. This temporary storage helps offset impacts of drought and decreasing the frequency and magnitude of high water events. Read more about beaver benefits at the Rogue Riverkeeper Blog.

HB 3464 is common-sense legislation that would remove the predatory animal designation from beaver in Oregon. It allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to begin to manage beaver on private land in Oregon, as it does other wildlife species. The bill also prompts the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a system for beaver management and beaver removal on private lands.

It will allow ODFW and the Commission to:

Promote the use of non-lethal beaver management tools before resorting to lethal removal

Set standards on when beavers can be removed

Create a reporting system on beaver removals in the state

Require landowners to report beaver killings to ODFW so the state can have a better picture of the landscape and make effective decisions to minimize harmful impacts of wildfires.