



May 3, 2023

Oregon Senate
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3464

Dear Chairman Golden, Vice-Chair Olsen and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 3464: legislation that would reclassify beaver (*Castor canadensis*) for management purposes in the Oregon Revised Statutes. HB 3464 is a common sense, balanced approach to improving the climate resilience of Oregon; centralizing and streamlining beaver management statewide; increasing and improving data collection to inform conservation and management; providing educational opportunities for landowners to profit from the presence of beavers; and all without affecting existing options to maintain recreational pursuits or protect private property.

Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) is a conservation organization based in Bend, Oregon with a mission to protect, defend and restore Oregon's high desert on behalf of our more than 14,000 members and supporters from across Oregon and beyond.

For more than 15 years, ONDA has been working with diverse stakeholders throughout Oregon's high desert to restore the hydrology, habitats, connectivity and climate resilience of desert streams by strategically addressing limiting factors that impede the management of riverscapes by beavers. These limiting factors can be grouped into four categories. The first three categories are habitat, hydrology, and topography. The fourth category represents the cultural aspect of direct human interactions with beavers and beaver habitat. Limiting factors in *all* four categories must be mitigated in order for beavers to successfully manage riparian zones and create the conditions necessary for biodiversity conservation and climate resiliency. The success of state, federal, local and landowner conservation and climate resilience strategies involving beavers depends on creating a culture, and supporting policy and legal framework, that values beavers and their role as ecosystem engineers.

ONDA supports HB 3464 for how it updates the state of Oregon's approach to beaver management, in recognition of the species' role in climate resiliency. As outlined and summarized most recently in [Beaver: The North American Freshwater Climate Action Plan](#), it is clear that beavers have an expansive and important role to play in a broader strategy for protecting Oregon's riverscapes, and the fish and wildlife, local communities and regional economies that depend on them. HB 3464 is our opportunity to align beaver management with other state policy goals and embrace that [there are important, needed benefits from beavers on private working lands](#).

ONDA also supports HB 3464 because it provides for the centralization of beaver data collection; streamlines management options with the state agency responsible for wildlife management; and supports opportunities to educate landowners about [more effective, and less expensive](#) ways to coexist with beavers. The bill also directly addresses concerns about gaps in our understanding of the beavers, which might impede effective beaver management.

Finally, ONDA supports HB 3464 because only the legislature can alter the statutory “predator” classification of beavers and thus [eliminate the associated regulatory and policy roadblocks](#) to improved management and data collection to support statewide wildlife conservation and climate resilience strategies.

HB 3464 is a common sense, balanced approach to improving the climate resilience of Oregon. The bill has bipartisan support from the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment; centralizes and streamlines beaver management among state agencies; increases and improves data collection to inform conservation and management; provides educational opportunities for landowners to profit from the presence of beavers; and all without affecting existing options to maintain recreational pursuits or protect private property.

Sincerely,

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