



To
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon

Date: 02.05.2024

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy and Members of the Committee

This testimony is submitted by the Oregon Wildlife Coalition in support of HB 4014 to provide funding for landowners living with beavers in order to facilitate conflict reduction and promote coexistence. Members of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition include Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Humane Society of the United States, Humane Voters Oregon, Oregon Wild, Portland Audubon, Western Environmental Law Center and Willamette Riverkeeper.

HB 4014 builds on the success of the last session where this very committee unanimously voted to remove beavers from the “predatory animal” statute on private lands. In doing so, the legislature opened doors to better monitoring of beaver population distribution in our state, and a better understanding of where beaver presence can benefit our ecosystems.

With the new designation as furbearers on private lands, landowners will have more opportunities to consider non-lethal mitigation tools and techniques. However, our state currently does not have any source of funding to support landowners, both financially and in technical capacity or expertise. The financial cost of a tool or the lack of technical ability and know-how might be deterrents for landowners who might otherwise be open to trying non-lethal options. This fund will help landowners who are hindered by these challenges from choosing a route of coexistence.

In addition to alleviating financial burden of landowners, the bill also allows for some of the funds to be used to build our state’s capacity in providing technical assistance to landowners. Currently, Oregon has very limited number of individuals who have the technical skill and capacity to help landowners, or experts who know the efficacy of tools based on the landscape.

We are hopeful that such a shift in approaching beaver impacts will build tolerance for the species over time and can help change the narrative about the species from “pest” to an ally of landowners and farmers, especially in the face of climate change impacts like drought and wildfires. ODFW, through their stakeholder process, developed a 3-year beaver management plan that recognizes the importance of private lands in maintaining a healthy population of beavers that can continue to provide the various

important ecosystem services. HB 4014 can support the implementation of the state's beaver management plan by creating opportunities on private lands and amplifying the ecosystem services they provide.

We urge you to support HB 4014 as an essential step to utilizing beaver benefits as part of natural climate solutions.

Thanking you for the opportunity

Cascadia Wildlands

Oregon Wild

Center for Biological Diversity

Western Environmental Law Center

Humane Society of the United States

Humane Voters Oregon

Portland Audubon

Willamette Riverkeeper