



February 5, 2024

Oregon House of Representatives
Committee on Climate, Energy and the Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 4014

Dear Chairwoman Marsh and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 4014 which provides additional support for private landowners who want beaver (*Castor canadensis*) living on their property. HB 4014 is a common sense bill that builds on HB 3464, enacted by the legislature last year, and the state's newly released "Three Year Beaver Action Plan." While HB 3464 encouraged private landowners to coexist with beavers, HB 4014 furthers this important policy by removing financial barriers that prevent interested landowners from implementing coexistence strategies on their property. The legislation centralizes funding to support non-lethal coexistence and allows organizations and agencies to develop and share specialized knowledge and skills to effectively implement mechanisms supporting beaver conservation and coexistence.

The 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 18,000 members and supporters from across Oregon and beyond.

For more than fifteen 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 restoration and maintenance 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 concerns the cultural aspect of direct human interactions with beavers and beaver habitat, and how human land uses, or activities may directly impact a beaver's ability to manage their 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. This especially includes implementing programs that support non-lethal strategies for coexistence with beavers.

ONDA supports HB 4014 for how it advances thoughtful, inclusive and balanced state policy that prioritizes and values beavers and their role in climate resiliency, while benefiting private landowners

who welcome beavers on their property. The evidence regarding the benefits of beaver managed floodplains is settled and substantial. As outlined and summarized most recently in [Beaver: The North American Freshwater Climate Action Plan](#), it is clear that beavers have a major role to play in a broad strategy for protecting Oregon's riverscapes, and the fish and wildlife, local communities and [regional economies that depend on them](#). HB 4014 is our next, key opportunity to update an antiquated approach to beaver management with additional solutions that are [less expensive, and more effective](#) while allowing landowners to continue to benefit from the services that beavers provide.

Sincerely, 

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