

February 4, 2024

**Subject: Letter in Support of HB 4014 - Beaver Funding Bill**

I have lived in Baker County in eastern Oregon for over 20 years. I am a retired Forest Service hydrologist/soils specialist and have been studying the many ways beavers restore our rivers and wetlands for almost 30 years. The long-term ecological and economic benefits that beavers bring are many and far-reaching but they also come with challenges, challenges that HB 4014 can help remedy. It is for this reason that I am writing to express my strong support for HB 4014, the beaver funding bill.

HB 4014 is an important next step in fostering coexistence between private landowners and beavers, which in turn benefits our entire community through increased fish and wildlife habitat, natural firebreaks, and improved water quality and stream flows. The economic, social and ecological value of these benefits will only increase with climate change as droughts and wildfires become more frequent and severe. For landowners who choose to co-exist with beavers and have fields bordering streams, the higher water tables alone will be beneficial.

Even knowing the benefits, change can be difficult which is why this bill is so valuable. The bill helps landowners in two important areas. Both are key to successfully resolving conflicts and allowing the benefits that beavers bring to be enjoyed. Passage of HB 4014 would:

- Make funds available to landowners for the purpose of implementing co-existence techniques in areas of concern.
- Provide funds to non-profits that would allow them to dedicate staff time to landowner outreach and education efforts and develop the technical assistance skills needed to assist landowners in co-existence.

Presently, Oregon faces a shortage of individuals with the necessary technical skills to assist landowners. This skill gap makes it difficult to implement beaver coexistence strategies in a timely manner, leading to recurring, often costly problems born by the landowner. This bill helps address the skill and information gap leading to a reduction in conflicts and costs.

I hope you will give the bill your full consideration and vote yes. I have included as part of my testimony a pdf of a powerpoint presentation given at the State of the Beaver Conference in 2023 by Dr. Katie Holzer of the City of Gresham. The powerpoint presentation has excellent graphs showing the contribution that beavers have made to the City's water quality efforts, and can make to landowners if they choose to co-exist.

All the best.

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