



Subject: Letter of Support for HB 4014 - Beaver Funding Bill

I am writing to express the strong support of Friends of the Owyhee for HB 4014, the beaver funding bill. Our organization is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Owyhee region, and we believe that this legislation is a crucial step in fostering coexistence between landowners and beavers, thereby contributing to the ecological well-being of our area.

We would like to share a compelling story from the Succor Creek area, where Friends of the Owyhee has witnessed successful coexistence between ranchers and beavers, resulting in significant improvements to the riparian area.

The results have been remarkable. The riparian area in Succor Creek has seen notable improvements in water retention, increased biodiversity, and enhanced vegetation growth. Beaver dams have acted as natural water storage, mitigating the effects of drought and contributing to a healthier, more resilient ecosystem.

This success story underscores the positive outcomes that can arise from coexistence with beavers when supported by informed and collaborative efforts. It serves as a testament to the potential impact of HB 4014 in providing the necessary resources for landowners to explore and implement non-lethal methods, fostering harmony between agriculture and ecology.

HB 4014 builds on the foundation laid by HB 3464 from the 2023 session, which removed beavers from the "predatory animal" statute. By classifying beavers as furbearers on private lands, this legislation offers landowners more opportunities to explore non-lethal mitigation tools and techniques. However, we acknowledge the current lack of dedicated funding to support landowners financially and in terms of technical capacity and know-how.

The funds allocated by HB 4014 are specifically targeted to assist landowners already coexisting with beavers who wish to explore non-lethal methods. This shift in approach aims to build tolerance for the species over time and change the narrative from perceiving beavers as pests to recognizing them as allies for landowners and farmers.

We appreciate the provision in the bill that allows some funds to be used for building the state's capacity in providing technical assistance to landowners. Presently, Oregon faces a shortage of individuals with the necessary technical skills to assist landowners, hindering the effective implementation of beaver coexistence strategies. This bill addresses this gap and helps bridge the knowledge divide.

It is important to note that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has developed a 3-year beaver management plan recognizing the significance of private lands in maintaining a



Friends of the Owyhee

healthy beaver population. However, ODFW lacks dedicated funds to implement this plan or to support landowners in coexisting with beavers. HB 4014 is a crucial step towards fulfilling this need.

In conclusion, Friends of the Owyhee wholeheartedly supports HB 4014 and believes it will contribute significantly to fostering coexistence between landowners and beavers. We urge you to consider the long-term ecological benefits and the positive impact this legislation can have on our region. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require further information or assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a circular flourish and a long horizontal line.

Tim Davis
Founder/Executive Director of Friends of the Owyhee.
Ontario, Oregon