



TRYON CREEK WATERSHED COUNCIL

HB 3143

2/3/2025

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Committee Members,

I write on behalf of Tryon Creek Watershed Council, in favor of House Bill 3143. The Tryon Creek Watershed is one of the largest forested urban watersheds in Oregon with high potential of supporting native and thriving salmon, trout, and Pacific Lamprey populations. Beavers are important allies in this work. Beaver dams' ability to store water and slowly release it later in the year helps to recharge groundwater and increase summer flows, reduce summer water temperatures and prolong water availability during droughts, and to reduce flood peaks. Conflicts between private landowners and beaver populations can be an issue meriting careful relationship-building, education, and technical assistance.

Through HB 3143, the Landowners Living with Beaver Grant Program Fund would be established within Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) through the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund (OCRF) to provide funding that supports beaver coexistence strategies. Watershed Councils, and other potential funded parties, are positioned to deliver technical assistance and support to landowners and simply need funding to do so.

This HB will provide a pathway for funding for projects that Tryon Creek Watershed Council has sought funding for, particularly the installation of Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) to support beaver populations for longer term benefits. Beaver Dam Analogs help reverse stream incision by impounding water and depositing sediments, including providing structure in the creek to help capture and sort gravels, providing substrate that existing coastal cutthroat trout and future salmon populations will need for spawning. They create deep pools, promote channel complexity, dissipate high flows, trap fine sediment, raise the water table, and store water across the floodplain for summertime use and expanded riparian vegetation growth. Water storage is a benefit which would be particularly beneficial for Tryon Creek's flashiness due to its urban influence. Beaver Dam Analogs increase habitat complexity, benefiting fish populations, and support amphibian biodiversity. HB 3143 will allow organizations like Tryon Creek Watershed Council to work across jurisdictional boundaries to support private landowners in co-existing with these important ecosystem engineers.

Tryon Creek Watershed Council encourages you to vote yes on HB 3143.



Thank you,

Alexis Barton Castro

Executive Director

Tryon Creek Watershed Council