

February 3, 2025

Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chairman
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: **Support for HB 3143**, Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program

Dear Co-Chairs Helm, Owens and Members of the Committee.

We request that this letter be entered into the public record on this matter. We strongly support HB 3143.

First, a little background about us. My wife and I are retired, and we own and manage about 101 acres of forestland in western Oregon near Estacada, which we have been doing for over 30 years. We are proud of our forest stewardship, and we were honored for our work in 2021 as Oregon's Tree Farmer of the Year. We also received the joint "Fish & Wildlife Steward Award for Forestlands" in 2020 from the Oregon Departments of Forestry and Fish & Wildlife, as well as the 2021 Partnership Award from the US Forest Service for our land stewardship and outreach in aquatic restoration. We actively manage our forest for many requirements and uses, ranging from infrequent timber harvesting to wildlife habitat enhancements, recreation, carbon sequestration & storage (a verified carbon reserve) and significant riparian restoration.

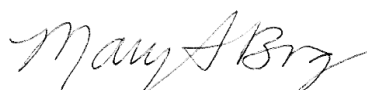
We support the beavers on our property and routinely have one or two active families living in our creek. They are indispensable to our management activities from creating wetlands and other water retention areas to developing marvelously complex and beneficial habitat for coho salmon rearing. We appreciate all the work they do for us – at no charge.

We believe the intent of HB 3143 will go a long way towards promoting beavers and allowing landowners to better coexist with them. We support the incentives and policy this bill will create along these lines.

In addition to what you have already stated in the bill, one item is often overlooked – beavers will often eat themselves out of house and home if there is not sufficient food supply available (including trees, shrubs and graminoids). (They will move on if a good food supply is no longer there and it may be years before they return when the supply regrows.) We have observed this on numerous occasions on our place. We have addressed this on our own by planting a variety of graminoids (sedges) and trees (Pacific willow and black cottonwood) in these areas the beavers use (they can browse almost an acre a year). We suggest you add plant restoration to your list of eligible projects (to at least include plantings of native trees, shrubs and graminoids where practicable). The funding could at least pay for the plant materials if not the crews to plant them. This effort will also improve the riparian corridor by increasing plant diversity and increasing the overstory (canopy) to help keep the waters cool, in addition to keeping the beavers where they need to be with an adequate food supply.

In summary, we support HB 3143.

Thank you.
Sincerely,



David & Mary Ann Bugni, 30265 SE Kowall Rd., Estacada, OR