



February 4, 2025

Co-Chair Representative Ken Helm,
Co-Chair Representative Mark Owens,
Vice Chair Representative Finger McDonald

Oregon House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3143, The “Landowners Living with Beavers” Bill

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 3143 that provides additional support for private landowners who welcome beaver (*Castor canadensis*) to live on their property. HB 3143 is a common sense bill that builds on legislative action in 2023 to reclassify beaver for management purposes in the Oregon Revised Statutes. The current bill also supports implementation of the state’s “Three Year Beaver Action Plan.”

HB 3143 eliminates financial barriers that prevent interested landowners from applying coexistence strategies on their property. The legislation centralizes funding to encourage 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.

For more than fifteen years, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) has worked 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 use 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 restore 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 3143 for how it advances thoughtful, inclusive and balanced state policy that both prioritizes and values beavers and their role in the ecosystem and benefits private landowners who host beavers on their property. The science on the benefits of beaver managed floodplains is settled and

substantial. As summarized most recently in [Beaver: The North American Freshwater Climate Action Plan](#), it is clear that beavers have a major role to serve in conserving and restoring Oregon's riverscapes, and the fish and wildlife, local communities and [regional economies that depend on them](#). HB 3143 is our next, key opportunity to update our state's approach to beaver management with additional solutions that support landowners that are also [less expensive and more effective](#) at securing the services that beavers provide.

Sincerely,

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