



February 4, 2025
Letter of Support for HB 3143

Dear members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

On behalf of the Board, staff, and members of McKenzie River Trust, we are writing this letter in support of HB 3143: Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program. This program would support landowners in finding new and innovative ways to coexist with beavers, contributing to a more climate-resilient landscape for Oregon's lands, rivers, and communities.

Since 2018, McKenzie River Trust has partnered with beavers to engage our community in conversations about watershed health, climate resiliency, and natural processes. Through programs including beaver monitoring, educational events, and evenings spent watching beavers on conservation lands, these humble rodents have become ambassadors for land and water conservation and restoration to thousands of people in our community.

From an environmental standpoint, beavers benefit Oregon's lands and waters. They help to slow and spread water across floodplains, which increases groundwater exchange, reduces erosion and sedimentation, buffers against localized flooding, and contributes to wildfire resiliency. Their dams also capture nutrients in off-channel areas where young salmon grow before journeying to the Pacific Ocean. Beaver-created wetland areas also sequester carbon at high rates, while increasing the diversity of plants and animals that can live in an area, including several Oregon Conservation Strategy species.

From a human standpoint, beavers are challenging neighbors. We've repeatedly heard from landowners looking to keep beavers on their property while protecting their working lands from destructive beaver activities. These people who care deeply about Oregon's lands and animals but rely on natural resource economies, including farming and forestry, are frustrated and looking for help.

Oregon has a significant opportunity to improve human-beaver relations. HB 3143 would provide the funding needed to engage and support private landowners in beaver conservation and find ways to better coexist on these shared lands we call home.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for this critical bill,

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