

Submitter: Zuriel van Belle

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3143

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

I am writing to express my support for HB 3143, the Landowners Living with Beavers bill, which provides funding under a grant program to encourage coexistence with beaver. The general public is starting to understand that beaver, a long underrated and underappreciated animal, are key players in healthy landscapes. This bill helps provide the tools landowners need to make beaver our allies in restoring habitat, mitigating climate change, and improving biodiversity.

In the 2018 book, “Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter”, Ben Goldfarb writes that beaver are “ecological and hydrological Swiss Army knives, capable, in the right circumstances, of tackling just about any landscape-scale problem you might confront. Trying to mitigate floods or improve water quality? There’s a beaver for that. Hoping to capture more water for agriculture in the face of climate change? Add a beaver. Concerned about sedimentation, salmon populations, wildfire? Take two families of beaver and check back in a year.” Goldfarb uses the rest of his book to support these bold claims with historical records, case studies, and research.

Many people may not yet know how living with beaver can benefit the landowner, the beaver, and the whole ecosystem. Landowners deserve the opportunity to access cutting edge coexistence approaches to beaver issues on their land. By reclassifying beaver, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and landowners will have the opportunity and tools needed to appreciate the role of beaver in a thriving ecosystem. HB 3143 will help landowners across the spectrum—from those who like beaver, to those who dislike beaver, to those who don’t have an opinion—access up-to-date information and strategies that suit their situation and needs. Beaver deserve to claim their role as a keystone species in the eyes of all Oregonians. These unassuming chestnut paddlers maintain and improve the beautiful landscapes we all love in Oregon—let’s help them do what they do best.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Zuriel van Belle
Milwaukie, Oregon