

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

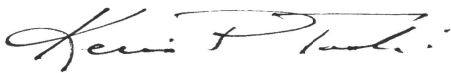
Honorable Committee Members:

Resistance to wildfire. Improved water quality and quantity. Enhanced, sub-irrigated meadows. Enriched biodiversity. Climate resilience. For these reasons and more, no discussion about the future of water or the protection of sensitive species in Oregon east of the Cascades would be complete without inclusion of beavers, and consideration of the out-sized role they play in slowing, spreading and storing water, while creating aquatic and riparian habitat in an otherwise arid landscape.

Through our collective ecological amnesia, we often fail to consider the profound impact that beavers once had on this region. Two hundred years ago beavers were trapped to near-extinction in the Pacific Northwest. Deliberate efforts to create “beaver deserts” were undertaken by rival fur companies. These efforts were ultimately successful, so much so that the beaver trade literally dried up by 1840, and mountain valleys were left to degrade and drain away to the ocean. Entire regional cultures and economies were rocked. Perhaps it is time to reexamine our relationship with beavers to achieve our goals of sustainability in the face of a changing climate.

As a citizen of Central Oregon, and a beneficiary of the many treasures here in the Pacific Northwest, I wish to express my gratitude for your consideration of House Bill 3143 relating to fostering coexistence with beavers. I strongly urge your support of this initiative. As a volunteer with Beaver Works Oregon, a function of the Bend, Oregon-based nonprofit Think Wild. Through those efforts, I’ve come to appreciate even more the valuable role beavers play on a resilient and productive landscape, and am hopeful for a broadscale recovery of beaver populations in Oregon resulting from your legislative efforts. Thank you!

Respectfully,



Kevin P. Tanski