



Eugene, Oregon / February 18, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

State Capitol Building, Salem, Oregon

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, Committee Members:

I support* for Senate Bill 354, proposing to expand Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's beaver relocation program to include the voluntary relocation of beavers from western Oregon to central and eastern Oregon.

This bill represents a **significant step forward in Oregon's wildlife management and ecological restoration efforts**. Beavers are keystone species that play a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Their dam-building activities create wetlands, improve water quality, and provide habitat for numerous other species¹. By relocating beavers to areas where they are native but currently absent, we can harness their natural engineering capabilities to enhance watersheds across the state⁶.

The proposed legislation addresses several important issues:

1. **Ecological Benefits:** Relocating beavers to central and eastern Oregon can help restore degraded habitats and improve water retention in areas prone to drought¹.
2. **Conflict Resolution:** This program offers a humane alternative to lethal removal when beavers come into conflict with human activities in western Oregon⁵.
3. **Economic Considerations:** The bill aligns with the interests of various stakeholders, including farmers and landowners.
4. **Scientific Approach:** The Department of Fish and Wildlife's involvement ensures that relocations will be conducted based on sound ecological principles and with consideration for the beavers' welfare⁵.
5. **Voluntary Participation:** The program's voluntary nature respects property rights while encouraging participation from willing landowners⁶.

It's important to note that **beaver relocation, when done properly, can be an effective tool for habitat restoration**. While some past relocation efforts have had mixed results, this bill provides an opportunity to implement best practices learned from previous experiences¹².

*Finally, and especially given the apparent overall intent of the bill, I **respectfully request that the current bill be amended by simply deleting Section 4 in its entirety**. Thank you for your consideration in this regard.

In conclusion, **Senate Bill 354 with the proposed amendment, represents a forward-thinking approach to wildlife management** that balances ecological needs with human interests. By expanding the beaver relocation program, Oregon can take a significant step towards improving its watersheds, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting sustainable land management practices.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Albert LePage" followed by a small circular mark.

Albert LePage, M. Ed. Science, B.S. Biology

Member, Society for Conservation Biology