



To
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR

Date: 03.21.2025

Letter of Support for HB 3932

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy and members of the Committee

We, the Oregon Wildlife Coalition, support HB 3932 (beaver and water quality bill) for the benefits it brings to our public lands as well as the fish and wildlife and human communities that depend on them.

Oregon's water quality is a serious environmental concern. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has survey data for only 46% of our waterways and of that waterways surveyed about two-thirds have been deemed "impaired". This "impaired" classification is based on recommendations for Oregon by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and by the federal Clean Water Act.

Category 4 and 5 of DEQ's categories of water quality standards fall in the "impaired" classification. Federal Clean Water Act requires DEQ to develop and implement what is known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for each of the pollutant for a waterway that causes it to be deemed impaired. DEQ does not have the resources to develop and implement TMDLs for all the waterways that need them. Indeed, most of their TMDLs are a result of litigation and court-mandated directive. DEQ's survey data indicates that the top five factors that lead to an "impaired" classification are high stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, sedimentation, bio-criteria (health of invertebrates) and shellfish toxins.

HB 3932 aims to address Oregon's severe water quality issues in streams deemed "impaired" by DEQ. The bill attempts to do that using natural ecological solution – specifically, beaver dam complexes that are known to slow down, filter and clear some of the known pollutants of our waterways. There is robust scientific evidence that beaver dams can improve water quality and address four of the five factors (that is, excluding shellfish toxins) that causes streams and rivers to be impaired in Oregon. HB 3932 proposes closing trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands classified as impaired by DEQ. The bill also provides an off ramp of removing the closures if a stream or river is removed from the impaired categories.

ODFW's 2024 data shows state and federal public lands combined accounted for only 4% of reported beaver harvest. Less beaver harvest reported on public lands is likely due to low beaver presence on public lands. This bill is not about limiting beaver harvest and increasing beaver population. Instead, this bill help retain the few beavers we have on public lands, and would enable others to access waterways where they need to be and remain there long enough to perform their ecosystem functions without getting trapped out.

We urge you to support HB 3932 for the benefits it will bring to water and wildlife, and Oregonians who depend on both.

Thanking you

Cascadia Wildlands

Humane World for Animals

Oregon Wild

Humane Voters Oregon

Defenders of Wildlife

Bird Alliance of Oregon

Western Environmental Law Center

Willamette Riverkeeper

Think Wild