

Submitter: George Hutchinson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Please vote to pass HB 3932, the Beavers and Water Quality Bill, which would close beaver hunting and trapping on public lands that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) classifies as impaired so they can help improve water quality and restore habitat. Over 100,000 miles of Oregon's waterways are in poor health - they have too high a temperature, too much sedimentation, and/or too many toxins. DEQ is required to restore these waterways, but to do so requires significant resources to design and implement plans to reduce this pollution. Fortunately, beavers can help do it for free! Beavers are ecosystem engineers. Beaver activities, such as canal-digging, dam-building, and pond-filling, can help slow water flow, restore impacted water tables and underground aquifers, create natural wetlands that filter toxins, expand riparian habitats for wildlife including sensitive bird species and incorporate woody debris in streams for salmon. Few wildlife species profoundly influence the landscape through the processes they set in motion that create and support entire biotic communities. When protections are afforded to beavers, they, in turn, directly increase and enhance wetlands and biological diversity. With proper management emphasizing the use of non-lethal conflict mitigation techniques and stewardship are in place, beavers can thrive, creating an environment supporting many rare and sensitive plants and animals, restoring riparian corridors, and building resilient ecological systems that help to mitigate against the effects of land-use changes, increased impervious surfaces and the impact of climate change.

Please support HB 3932 so we can allow beavers to help restore Oregon's thousands of miles of impaired waterways for free. HB 3932 targets rivers and streams categorized as Category 4 or 5 by DEQ's water quality standards – both indicate impaired waterways. This also includes waterways deemed impaired under the Clean Water Act. More than 2/3rd of surveyed waterways in Oregon (106,390 miles) are currently classified as "impaired."

The bill proposes closing hunting and trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands deemed impaired by DEQ. Robust scientific evidence shows that beaver dam complexes can address most of these water quality issues. And they do it for FREE! Beavers are ecosystem engineers. Their activities, such as canal-digging and dam-building, help slow water flow, restore impacted water tables and underground aquifers, create natural wetlands that filter toxins, and create wildlife and fish habitats at the same time. Almost half of Oregon's streams and rivers suffer from poor water quality. That's over 100,000 miles of waterways! The Department of Environmental Quality is tasked with restoring these waterways but lacks the resources to do this at

the scale needed. This is where beavers can help. Passing HB 3932 would allow beavers to help restore these waterways by closing hunting and trapping of beavers on these impaired waterways on public lands. There is robust scientific evidence that beaver dam complexes can address most of the water quality issues of concern. They enable beavers to access waterways where they need to be and remain long enough to perform their ecosystem functions without getting trapped.