



Alan R.P. Journet Ph.D.  
Cofacilitator  
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now  
[alan@socan.eco](mailto:alan@socan.eco)  
541-500-2331  
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## SOCAN Testimony supporting HB3932

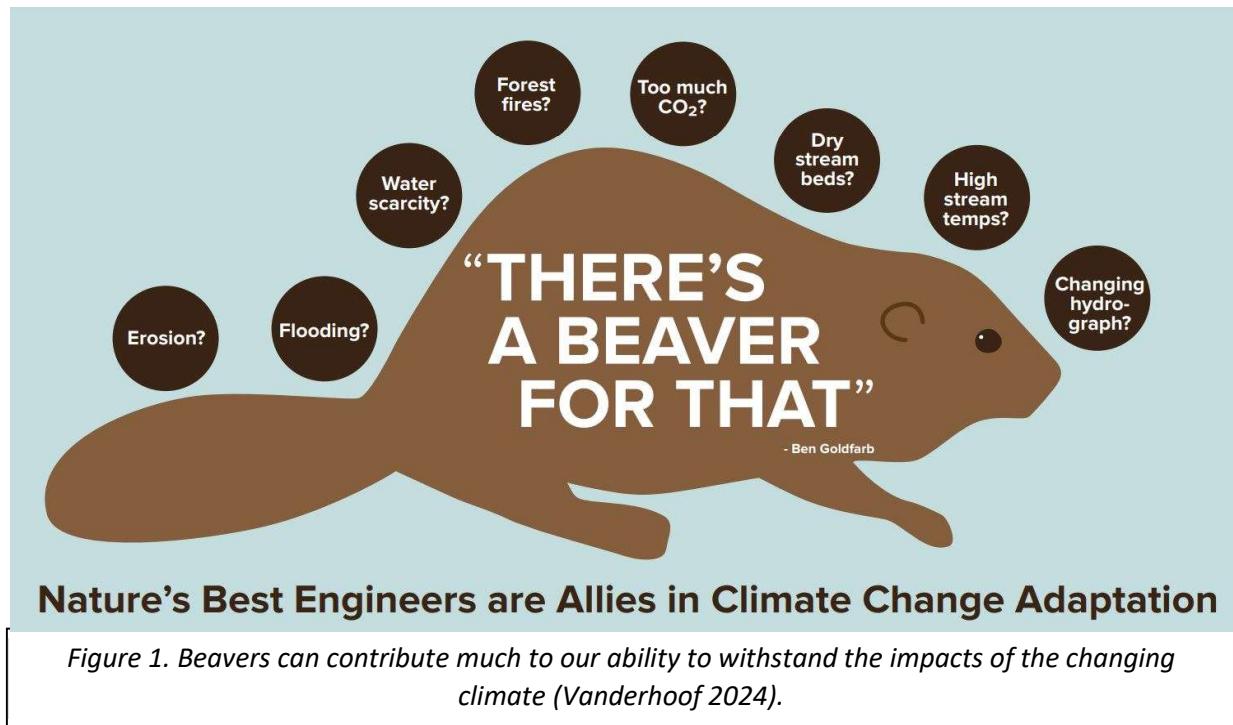
Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

I write as cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, an organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and encourage state action to address it. I have stated previously that as rural and coastal Oregonians, we live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to produce. Because of this, we pay close attention to what is happening in Salem in terms of legislative proposals that address the climate crisis. We are interested not only in bills that contribute to emissions reductions and greenhouse gas sequestration, both of which reduce the atmospheric concentration of these gases (mitigation), but also in bills that help us prepare for the inevitable climate consequences that global warming delivers and promises (adaptation).

During the 2023 session, I testified on behalf of SOCAN in support of HB3464 seeking to alleviate the pressure on an herbivorous animal then incorrectly defined as a predator on private land allowing it to be hunted without limit. While we were pleased that the bill was successful, we were disappointed that the final bill contained many loopholes that would allow landowners and land managers still to kill beavers. We understand that many landowners find beavers cause problems for their operations and compromise management goals. However, we are also well aware that there are ways to live with beavers (ODFW 2023). We are also aware that Project Beaver Executive Director Jakob Shockey and staff have experience advising landowners on how to co-exist with beavers. (see Project Beaver 2023). We approve of the concept of providing landowners and land managers with advice and tools to allow their coexistence with these animals. We testified in support of HB4014 last session and were disappointed that it failed to make the cut.

In 2025, we again return to the legislature to urge protection of the state animal through HB3932. Reporting on the Environmental Integrity Project document 'The Clean Water Act at 50 (EIP 2022), Baumhardt (2022) states: "Oregon has more than 120,000 miles of polluted or

“impaired” rivers and streams – the most nationwide...” Hadahazy (2022), reporting on a Stanford University study (Dewey et al. 2022) indicated: “ The research reveals that when it comes to water quality in mountain watersheds, beaver dams can have a far greater influence than climate-driven, seasonal extremes in precipitation. The wooden barriers raise water levels upstream, diverting water into surrounding soils and secondary waterways, collectively called a riparian zone. These zones act like filters, straining out excess nutrients and contaminants before water re-enters the main channel downstream.” Meanwhile, McNamara (2023) states: “Beavers are ecological engineers whose ponds store carbon, improve water quality, create



habitat to support biodiversity, and help reduce climate impacts.”

As depicted by Vanderhoof (2024) in Figure 1, beavers can contribute much to our ability to withstand the impacts of the changing climate.

As van Vliet et al. (2023) state in initiating the abstract of their study “Climate change and extreme weather events (such as droughts, heatwaves, rainstorms and floods) pose serious challenges for water management, in terms of both water resources availability and water quality.” There can be little doubt that as the consequences of global warming become more evident, the value of beavers will be enhanced.

Because of the ecological benefits accruing to our natural world from encouraging and maintaining healthy beaver populations, particularly in water bodies with impaired quality, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now endorsed HB3932 and strongly urges its swift passage with a Do Pass recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted



Alan Journet Ph.D.

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Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

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