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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Oregon's natural waterways are a key part of what makes Oregon such a beautiful state. When I think of our waterways, I always think back to my childhood watching, swimming in and hiking along the wild and Scenic, teal-blue waters of the North Umpqua River. And I think of how pivotal waterways are in the arid eastern two-thirds of Oregon. Beaver are a keystone species, which affect all ecosystem components around them, including waterway filtration.

But only 46 percent of our waterways have been assessed for water quality. Approximately one-third of waterways have quality deemed impaired by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Federal funding for state programs is in a chaotic place; state funding for state programs and employees to carry them out may be difficult to enact in a timely manner. Beaver are nature's solution to water quality and other ecosystem problems. Restricting beaver take, which will allow beaver populations to increase, in watersheds in need of ecological and water quality restoration is a step forward in improving them.

I hope current and future generations of Oregonians will always have clean waters to swim in each summer, and that those memories are an important part of their lives as they grow up and become parents themselves. I hope they always get to relive those memories with their own children and friends. And I hope today's decisions to restrict beaver take are a step forward in making that future possible.