

Submitter: Pat Kaczmarek

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Letter of Support for HB 3932

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

As an Oregon resident and environmental advocate, I am writing in support of HB 3932. Oregon once had a population of beavers in the millions. These natural stream stewards are part of the ecosystem that creates healthy waterways that mitigate flooding and reduce threats of wildfire. Beavers are a keystone species that enable streams and rivers to develop lush growth of tree canopies and understory shrubs and forbs that shade streams and allow for refugia for fish populations. Beavers are wetland engineers, creating natural water filtration systems to clean streams of toxins and sequester climate warming carbon.

Human activities in Oregon have channelized our river systems, and dams have disrupted many of the beneficial qualities of natural water systems. These changes occurred along with the near extirpation of beavers in our state due to the fur trade. In response, our waterways have become impaired, wildlife has been decimated, drinking water sources require costly filtration systems, and wildfires now threaten our communities. To address these outcomes, our state now invests heavily in restoration efforts.

Beavers are a natural, low cost addition to our restoration work. HB 3932 would close beaver hunting and trapping in waterways deemed impaired on public lands in Oregon. This moratorium would allow beaver populations to recover, providing the ecosystem services that improve water quality and other benefits to public lands as well as the fish, wildlife and human communities that depend on them.

Environmental groups have been studying the benefits of increased beaver populations on watersheds for years. This is a known and cost effective way to restore healthy ecosystems in Oregon. Please support HB 3932 in this legislative session and allow beavers to once more enrich our state with their natural engineering skills.

Thank you,