

Submitter: Serena Lim

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Beaver activities, including 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 imperiled salmon. In other words, beavers improve water quality and restore habitat.

More than 2/3rd of surveyed waterways in Oregon (106,390 miles) are currently classified as “impaired.” DEQ deems waters impaired based on certain criteria including water temperature, sedimentation, level of dissolved oxygen, etc. To restore impaired waterways, DEQ needs to develop TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Load assessments) for each waterway. But TMDLs are expensive, and DEQ lacks resources to develop and implement a TMDL for every stream and watershed that needs one. As a result, most streams continue to stay impaired in Oregon. Fortunately, beavers can help restore unhealthy waterways FOR FREE!

This bill proposes closing hunting and trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands that are deemed impaired by DEQ. Robust scientific evidence shows that beaver dam complexes can address most of these water quality issues. The bill does not apply to private lands and provides an off-ramp if the “impairment” designation is lifted. Please pass HB 3932!