



March 25, 2025

Chairs Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment,

Re: HB 3932 Beavers and Water Quality – Support

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by providing technical services and supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers, and with federal, state and nonprofit partners.

Water quality is a serious environmental concern for Oregon. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) survey data indicates a large number of Oregon's waterways are deemed "impaired". HB 3932 aims to address Oregon's severe water quality issues in streams deemed "impaired" (Categories 4 and 5) by DEQ. The bill attempts to do so by using a natural ecological solution – specifically, beaver dam complexes that are known to slow down, filter and clear some of the known pollutants of our waterways. There is robust scientific evidence that beaver dams can improve water quality and address many of the factors that cause streams and rivers to be impaired in Oregon. HB 3932 proposes closing trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands classified as impaired by DEQ. The bill also provides an off ramp of removing the closures if a stream or river is removed from the impaired categories.

In addition to improving water quality in our many impacted waterways, beavers create and restore wetlands which translate to new habitat and food resources for many wildlife and fish species, including endangered salmon. Beaver-managed floodplains help approximately half of all Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Species.

ODFW's 2024 data shows state and federal public lands combined accounted for only 4% of reported beaver harvest. Less beaver harvest reported on public lands is likely due to low beaver presence on public lands. This bill is not about limiting beaver harvest and increasing beaver population. Instead, this bill helps retain the few beavers we have on public lands, and would enable others to access waterways where they need to be and remain there long enough to perform their ecosystem functions without getting trapped out.

OACD and SWCD's recognize the value beavers bring to the landscape. And we urge you to support passage of HB 3932 - "Beavers and Water Quality Bill".

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

Andrea Kreiner, Executive Director
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
P.O. Box 10527, Portland, Oregon 97296
andrea.kreiner@oacd.org
971-988-9929
www.OACD.org