

Submitter: Suzanne Fouty

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

I am writing in support of HB 3932. I am a retired Forest Service hydrologist and soils specialist and a researcher. I live in drought-prone eastern Oregon. My research and work over the last 30 years has focused on water issues and how cattle, elk, and beavers influence stream systems. I continue to do research on the complex and water-rich habitat beavers create via their dam building activity and the benefits that human and wild communities reap as a result of that habitat at no charge.

HB 3932 will result in increases in beaver numbers which will result in increased dams, ponds, and wetlands on our public lands. These habitat features are known to improve water quality and increase the amount of water temporarily stored on public lands to the benefit of fish, wildlife, and the human communities who depend on water for farms, fields, and as drinking water. It would increase the quality and abundance of fish and wildlife habitat, and in turn lead to improved numbers. In addition, the dams that beavers build and the wetlands they create will help minimize the impacts of wildfires on water quality, will help dampen flood peaks, and contribute to increase stream flows during drought. Wildfire, drought, flooding, poor water quality and increased water insecurity, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and declining fish and wildlife are major concerns for Oregonians. HB 3932 would help address all these issues.

As for concerns related to increased conflicts, infrastructure on public lands is limited unlike on private lands which would not be affected by this bill. Contrary to some concerns you will hear, farmers and ranchers will be major beneficiaries of improved stream flows off of public lands as a result of increased beaver dam building and the wetlands and ponds that result from that dam building activity. If there are beaver-related conflicts on private lands, the farmers and ranchers still will be able to address them.

Oregon faces huge budget challenges. These challenges will be compounded by increased frequency of drought and wildfires with its negative economic costs, and increased demands for the water resources that originate on public lands as Oregon's population continues to grow. Passage of HB 3932 would allow all Oregonians to benefit from the water-related services that result from abundant beavers and the habitat they create. I urge you to support HB 3932.

I am including two attachments: one that shows the magnitude of the future water benefits due to beaver dam building and one that provides a comparison of an area

post wildfire with and without beaver dams, ponds, and wetlands.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

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