

Submitter: Kaitlin Gale

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Testimony Opposing Oregon House Bill 3932

Presented to the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Introduction

Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kate Gale, and I reside in Portland, Oregon. I am a lifelong Oregonian, an Army veteran, and a disabled individual who has relied on hunting and trapping for sustenance throughout my life. Today, I virtually come before you to express my opposition to House Bill 3932, which seeks to prohibit the taking of beavers on certain waters and public lands within designated watersheds.

Personal Background

As someone who has spent decades engaging with Oregon's natural landscapes, I have developed a deep appreciation for our state's wildlife and ecosystems. Hunting and trapping have not only provided me with essential sustenance but have also fostered a profound connection to the environment. These activities have been instrumental in my physical and mental well-being, offering therapeutic benefits that are particularly significant given my status as a disabled veteran.

Concerns Regarding HB 3932

While I recognize the ecological importance of beavers as ecosystem engineers, I have several concerns regarding the implications of HB 3932:

1. Efficacy of Trapping Bans on Ecological Outcomes

Research indicates that prohibiting beaver trapping does not uniformly lead to positive ecological outcomes. For instance, studies have shown that while beaver populations may increase following trapping bans, this can also lead to unintended consequences such as flooding of agricultural lands, damage to infrastructure, and increased human-wildlife conflicts. These outcomes can necessitate costly management interventions that may offset the intended ecological benefits.

2. Role of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

The ODFW Commission, comprising qualified professionals appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, is tasked with sustainably managing

Oregon's wildlife populations. The Commission has previously considered and rejected similar proposals to ban beaver trapping on multiple occasions due to insufficient scientific evidence supporting such measures. This demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based management practices that balance ecological health with human interests.

3. Impact on Individuals Dependent on Trapping

For individuals like myself, who rely on hunting and trapping for sustenance, the prohibition outlined in HB 3932 poses significant challenges. The bill would restrict access to traditional means of procuring food and maintaining a livelihood, particularly affecting disabled individuals and veterans who may have limited alternatives. Moreover, the cultural and therapeutic aspects of these activities cannot be overstated, as they contribute to our overall well-being and sense of purpose.

Conclusion

In light of the above considerations, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose HB 3932. While the protection of Oregon's natural resources is a shared priority, it is essential that legislative actions are grounded in robust scientific evidence and take into account the diverse needs of all Oregonians. I believe that collaborative efforts, guided by the expertise of the ODFW and inclusive of stakeholder perspectives, will better serve our state's ecological and human communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.