

Submitter: DJ Fletcher
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

March 24, 2025

Members of The House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR 2025 HB 3932 "RELATING TO PROTECTING BEAVERS"

Dear Mr. Chairman Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and B. Levy, and Members of the Committee:

As an Oregon voter, I look for legislative proposals such as HB 3932, "Relating to Protecting Beavers," because I support State conservation efforts. I am always hopeful that future generations will be able to point to Oregon as an exemplary protector of waterways, wildlands, and wildlife. The beaver, a keystone species, should be allowed to be an active part of this future.

I ask you to support HB 3932 in order that beavers can fulfill their natural role as a key player in maintaining healthy streams and rivers and, particularly, in helping to restore the State's more than 100,000 miles of waterways that are deemed impaired. While the Department of Environmental Quality is tasked with protecting water quality and restoring these waterways, the agency lacks the resources to do it all -- and understandably so, I would say.

What is needed is the "stream doctor," the beaver, to swim in and apply a "dam natural solution": Beavers' dam complexes can address most water quality issues of concern, according to scientists.

HB 3932 would enable the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to prohibit persons from taking a beaver in specified watersheds or on public land within certain watersheds or near certain waters. Thus beavers would be able to access the impaired waterways where they need to be and remain long enough to perform their "stream doctor" functions without getting trapped out.

We know beavers as our "cute" State animal, yet not everyone knows beavers as one of Nature's best engineers. I learned how amazing their engineering work is

when I watched an OPB video about a beaver-assisted salmon restoration project in Eastern Oregon that included before-and-after footage. I saw a narrowed stream that, without any beavers, had become incised over time, channeled deeply from erosion. The video showed that, over about 12 years' time, biologists brought back beavers into the narrowed stream, and the beavers transformed it into a healthy, meandering stream with a thriving riparian plant and animal habitat. The salmon population was restored; in fact, juvenile salmon increased by almost 180 percent. Those beavers turned back time -- in a good way!

The benefits of beavers' dam-building and canal-digging work are many, including increased fire resilience where they thrive. Their work slows water flows and widens streams and rivers; helps regulate water temperature; creates natural wetlands that filter toxins and provide drought protection; restores impacted water tables and underground aquifers; promotes native vegetation and shaded riparian areas; and creates healthy habitat not only for fish like salmon and steelhead, but also for other aquatic species and wildlife.

The passage of HB 3932 would be a boon for water quality in the State, and it would certainly help rural and farming communities by helping to restore watersheds where waters have become polluted, stagnant, and/or unable to support native fish.

Also, the passage of HB 3932 would help safeguard investments of time, labor, and funding in beaver-based restoration work. The dedicated folks at ProjectBeaver.org whom I have talked with know what a difference that would make.

I hope for your support.

Sincerely,

DJ Fletcher
Central Point, OR

[Submitted via OLIS website testimony portal]