

Submitter: Willow Kasner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Committee Members,

Being a 6th generation Oregonian (5th gen on the coast) from families of farmers and loggers on both sides- I understand the discussion of beavers and the adversity locals have felt about them over the decades. My own family used to blow up their dams, believing they were causing our fields to flood. Now we have learned that in fact, the beavers were creating the cool clean water that we and the salmon that spawn up our creek, rely on. Without them, our beloved Beaver Creek was warmer, dirtier and much lower. As we learn more, we realize that beavers are a crucial keystone species that create the cold clean water of the past. Now, more than ever before, we need their help returning our creeks and streams to health!

I urge you to support HB 3932, a bill that would harness the natural abilities of beavers- nature's ecosystem engineers, as their presence can significantly contribute to the recovery of our state's rivers and streams, which have been consistently struggling with (often human activity caused) water quality issues.

Over 106,000 miles of Oregon's rivers and streams are classified as "impaired" by the DEQ, primarily due to factors such as high water temperatures, sedimentation, low dissolved oxygen levels, and pollutants. These impairments pose a serious threat to aquatic ecosystems and human communities alike. While DEQ is responsible for restoring these waterways, the agency lacks the necessary resources to implement TMDL assessments and solutions at the scale required (DEQ, 2025).

Here, beavers can offer a cost-effective, and natural solution. Beaver dams function as powerful tools for improving water quality. These dams slow water flow, allowing sediments to settle, and help retain nutrients and pollutants through natural filtration processes. The microbes and plants in and around the dam can transform harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals, into less toxic forms. Furthermore, beaver-created wetlands serve as natural habitats for fish and wildlife, contributing to biodiversity and enhancing the resilience of the ecosystem (USFW, 2024).

Scientific research consistently demonstrates that beaver dams address many of the key water quality impairments we face, including excess sedimentation, nutrient loading, and water temperature fluctuations. By providing these essential services for free, beavers can significantly reduce the need for costly human-engineered interventions. In fact, numerous studies show that beaver activity leads to higher

water tables, reconnected floodplains, increased summer base flows, & improved aquatic habitats (USDW, 2024)

HB 3932 specifically targets waterways categorized as impaired by the DEQ and proposes closing hunting and trapping on these public lands to allow beavers to remain and restore their health. This bill is not about increasing beaver populations, but about enabling beavers to perform their vital ecosystem functions without disruption. It applies only to public lands and provides a mechanism for revisiting the regulations if a waterway's impairment status is lifted for 6 consecutive years.

This is not only a proactive step toward addressing our water quality crisis, but also an opportunity to embrace a cost-effective solution that complements existing restoration efforts. Beaver dam complexes are well-documented in their ability to address the very water quality issues that DEQ is working to mitigate, and their restoration benefits extend beyond to include wildlife habitat & floodplain restoration.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB 3932 and encourage you to take this important step toward regaining our water's safety and quality.

Sincerely,

Willow Kasner

Beavercreek Valley, Siuslaw National forest Watershed, Oregon

- Beaver dams: A natural pollution solution. [Projectbeaver.org](https://projectbeaver.org)
- Or. DEQ (2025) Water quality standard & impaired waters
- USFW (2024) The Beaver Restoration Guidebook