

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

HB 3932 targets rivers and streams categorized as Category 4 or 5 by DEQ's water quality standards — both indicate impaired waterways. This also includes waterways deemed impaired under the Clean Water Act.

More than 2/3rd of surveyed waterways in Oregon (106,390 miles) are currently classified as "impaired." DEQ deems waters impaired based on certain criteria including water temperature, sedimentation, level of dissolved oxygen, etc.

To restore impaired waterways, DEQ needs to develop TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Load assessments) for each waterway. But TMDLs are expensive, and DEQ lacks resources to develop and implement a TMDL for every stream and watershed that needs one. As a result, most streams continue to stay impaired in Oregon.

The bill proposes closing hunting and trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands that are deemed impaired by DEQ. Robust scientific evidence shows that beaver dam complexes can address most of these water quality issues. And they do it for FREE!

The bill does not apply to private lands and provides an off-ramp if the "impairment" designation is lifted.