



Testimony in Support of HB 3932 – Beaver & Water Quality Bill

March 25, 2025

House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, and Levy and members of the committee,

The Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center based in Ashland Oregon represents approximately 10,000 members and supporters across Oregon and beyond. We support HB 3932 (the beaver and water quality bill) for the benefits it brings to watersheds, water quality, and the fish, wildlife and human communities that depend on them.

About 60 percent of the Rogue basin is publicly owned. Many miles of streams in this watershed are designated as water quality impaired for multiple parameters including temperature, bacteria, nutrients, algae, sediment, and more. Much of the Rogue basin supports native and threatened fish as well as supplying municipal, domestic, and agricultural water users. Under the Clean Water Act, Oregon has an obligation to protect and improve impaired water quality. One of the best ways we have found to address multiple water quality problems is through the activities associated with beavers.

HB 3932 aims to address Oregon's water quality issues in streams deemed "impaired" by DEQ. The bill attempts to do that using a no-cost natural ecological solution – specifically, by allowing the presence of beaver and their structures which are known to slow down and allow for the landscape to absorb surface water, improve shading riparian habitat, and filter and remove some of the known pollutants in our waterways. HB 3932 proposes closing trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands classified as impaired by DEQ. The bill also provides an off ramp of removing the closures if a stream or river is removed from the impaired categories.

This bill is not about stopping beaver trapping because according to ODFW, during 2024, only 4% of reported beaver hunting took place on public land. Most of the Rogue basin streams are a

long way from having “too many” beavers. If beavers do cause damage, this bill allows for take of beaver on public lands in instances of damage caused by beavers on adjacent private lands. This bill is about retaining beavers where they are and allowing beavers to disperse to public lands and stay there long enough to perform their ecological functions without getting trapped out.

Beaver will populate areas that have diverse land use from agricultural to urban. Following the Alameda Fire of 2020, there were multiple beaver dams in place in the Bear Creek watershed (a tributary of the Rogue River) by the first summer after the fire. Beaver will occupy even poor habitat and do their work to improve vegetation and the water holding and filtering capacity of the landscape. This bill is about allowing Oregon to provide for a proven tool to protect watersheds and water quality. Why should private and public funds and effort be used for watershed restoration when beaver can provide many similar benefits for no cost. With damage mitigation and coexistence strategies still a part of overall beaver management, let’s allow beavers to stay on public land and get to work to benefit waterways and water quality for all of us. KS Wild strongly urges the committee to support HB 3932. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frances Oyung
Program Manager
Rogue Riverkeeper