



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Fish & Wildlife

4034 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE

Salem, OR. 97302

(503) 947-6044

(503) 947-6042

dfw.state.or.us

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**To: The Honorable John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment**

House Bill 3932

Shaun Clements, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

The department appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 3932 regarding the relationship to the existing process for setting harvest regulations and some recent history regarding The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission consideration of beaver harvest. The Department has no position on HB 3932.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has historically prescribed the times, places and manner in which wildlife may be taken by angling, hunting, trapping or other methods and the amounts of each of those wildlife species that may be taken and possessed per the authority granted in ORS 496.162. The Commission has considered whether to ban beaver harvest in four separate Commission meetings since 2020 in response to petitions or requests. The Commission has, to date, declined to ban harvest, in part because available data indicate it is not limiting beaver abundance. For example, 108 and 59 beaver were harvested on all State and Federal Lands in Oregon in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

In exercising their authority under ORS 496.162, the Commission is required to consider the co-equal goals in the wildlife policy (ORS 496.012) and make decisions based on best available science and with input from the public and affected parties. Specific to beaver management and water quality, the relationship between beaver, beaver dams, and water quality is context dependent. A recent global literature review co-authored by EPA scientists (Grudinski et al. 2022) found that beaver dam effects on water quality and biota are complex and variable as a result of geographic and environmental conditions, including seasonal changes. These findings align with recent research in Oregon (e.g., Stevenson et al. 2022, Holzer HB 3932 testimony 2025), the Intermountain West (e.g., Murray, Neilson, and Brahney 2021), and globally (e.g., Brazier et. 2021), that beaver dam effects are mixed and depend on system conditions, pond age and pond physical characteristics. Such context dependent information is considered during Commission decision making, in addition to a range of other information regarding population health, life history, habitat conditions, etc.

As a result of the Commission process and an associated workgroup including various stakeholders, the department has developed and is implementing a beaver action plan. The goal of the plan is to increase the pace and scale of landscape restoration of beaver and beaver modified habitat. Details of

this plan can be viewed here:

https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/ODFW_3YBeaverModLandscapesActionPlan_Final_20230616.pdf

CONTACT: Shaun Clements, Deputy Director (Shaun.Clements@odfw.oregon.gov)

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