

Please do not support HB3932. Wildlife management by legislation does not work. Please respect the long standing and successful practice of allowing facts and data derived from proven scientific methods to drive decisions. Legislation is too inflexible to adapt to the changing conditions of the natural world we have the privilege of stewarding.

### 1. What the Bill Actually Does

HB 3932 would make it illegal for anyone—except agency personnel responding to damage complaints—to trap or otherwise take a beaver on public lands that lie **within 200 feet of any waterbody the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) labels “impaired.”** Because the DEQ list seldom gets updated even when conditions improve, the prohibition would become effectively permanent across huge swaths of the state.

### 2. Oregon Already Has a Science-Based Beaver Policy

Oregon’s core wildlife statute, **ORS 496.012**, directs ODFW to “prevent the serious depletion” of species—including beavers—using the best available science. The agency assembled a Beaver Management Work Group, adopted Best Management Practices, and, on four separate occasions since 2020, the Fish and Wildlife Commission **reviewed and rejected petitions to ban trapping because the data showed harvest is *not* limiting beaver abundance.**

### 3. Trapping Is a Conservation Tool—Not a Crisis

Beavers are ecological engineers, but unchecked populations can—and do—flood roads and farms, block salmon passage, undermine levees, and kill valuable timber. States that have tried blanket bans (e.g., Massachusetts in 1996) saw skyrocketing conflict complaints and emergency kills that dwarfed regulated harvest. Modern trapping, guided by nationally vetted Best Management Practices, lets biologists keep beaver numbers in balance while still allowing them to perform their wetland-building magic.

### 4. HB 3932 Undermines the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

More than **80 percent of ODFW’s wildlife-management budget comes from hunting, fishing, and trapping license dollars and federal excise taxes on those activities.** When legislators shut the door on consumptive use without replacing that revenue, they erode the very system that funds habitat restoration and non-game research. That is the opposite of conservation.

### 5. A Misuse of the Public-Trust Doctrine

Wildlife belongs to all citizens; elected officials hold it *in trust* but delegate day-to-day decisions to professional biologists. HB 3932 flips that on its head by trying management to

a static DEQ list created for water-chemistry regulations, not wildlife. It removes the adaptive, science-driven authority of ODFW and replaces it with a one-size-fits-all legislative mandate—exactly what the Public-Trust Doctrine warns against.

#### 6. A Trojan Horse for a Statewide Trapping Ban

Even the bill's supporters admit HB 3932 is “part of a broader campaign” to end beaver trapping altogether. If lawmakers override the Commission on beavers today, predators and furbearers will be next. The pattern is familiar: incremental bans, followed by ballot-box campaigns that paint science-based management as “cruel.”

#### 7. The Better Path Forward

Oregon already has the tools to:

- **Monitor populations** through ongoing Beaver Management Action Plan studies.
- **Apply non-lethal methods first** where they work—flow devices, fencing, relocation.
- **Issue tightly regulated harvest permits** where damage or over-abundance occurs.
- **Re-evaluate rules every season** in public Commission meetings, not once-and-done legislation.

That adaptive framework respects both beavers *and* the people who live and work beside them. HB 3932 would freeze management in law, ignore new data, and force expensive emergency responses when conflicts spike.

Sincerely,

Danny Miller