

Submitter: Heidi Hartman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Dear Members of the Committee,

I support HB 3932, the Beaver and Water Quality Bill, for its recognition of the vital role beaver populations play in maintaining healthy waterways and supporting Oregon's wildlife. The presence of beavers and the way they engineer their environments—improves water quality, mitigates drought and wildfire impacts, and fosters biodiversity. The legislature took a critical step toward recognizing that the presence of beaver benefits Oregon's ecosystems and promoting beaver population recovery through the passage of HB 3464. But it's only by building on this foundation and advancing beaver coexistence strategies that we can achieve those climate mitigation, wildfire refugia, and firebreak benefits highlighted by the law. As someone who works in watershed restoration, one of the key takeaways is that removal is not a lasting solution in the immediate or the long term. Trapping only provides temporary relief, as it is only a matter of time until another beaver moves in or the habitat degrades due to their absence. Proven coexistence strategies, like flow devices and culvert protection, offer a more cost-effective and sustainable approach. The millions spent on statewide habitat restoration efforts aimed at promoting beaver recovery will have little impact if just a couple miles downstream of the project, any existing or incoming beavers are trapped out. As an example, Beaver Works Oregon's multi-year beaver habitat restoration project at Collier Memorial State Park is near several "impaired" public waterways, where our efforts can contribute to ecosystem recovery. However, the benefits of these efforts, along with other local conservation organizations, are undermined if the few remaining beavers in these impaired waterways are lethally removed or relocated. Allowing the continued lethal control of beavers is ecologically harmful and undermines vital conservation efforts across Oregon. Protecting beavers by limiting trapping and hunting, especially along impaired waterways, strengthens restoration initiatives while also improving water quality and drought resistance for all Oregonians. We urge the legislature to pass this bill and recognize the essential role beavers play in sustaining the state's natural resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.