

Submitter: Stan Steele

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Senator Jeff Golden, Chair

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife

900 Court St. NE

Salem Oregon 97301

RE: H.B.3932: Prohibits a person from taking a beaver on waters or watersheds that are classified in a certain manner or on public land

Position: OPPOSE

Dear Chair, Golden and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Oregon Trappers Association Response to HB 3932: The Emperor Has No Clothes

The Oregon Trappers Association (OTA) strongly opposes HB 3932, the so-called Beaver Protection Bill, which fundamentally misrepresents the reality of beaver populations and their harvest rates in Oregon.

While proponents argue that the ecological benefits of beaver abundance face significant threats from regulated trapping, the latest Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) data tells a starkly different story. This newly released 2023 harvest data exposes the truth:

HB 3932 Is Based on Illusion, Not Science

Much like the fabled emperor parading in invisible garments, HB 3932 attempts to present an ecological beaver harvest crisis that does not exist. The newly revealed ODFW harvest data shows:

- Total beaver harvest was only 1,495, spread across 115 licensed trappers statewide.
- 53% of harvest occurred on private land, ensuring landowner management rights remain intact.
- 40% took place in navigable waters, where beaver activity significantly impacts floodplain stability.
- Public land harvest was minimal, contradicting claims that trappers are overexploiting public beaver populations.
- Conflict-related removals were nearly nonexistent, with just 11 beavers removed statewide due to complaints.

These numbers directly disprove the premise of HB 3932. The bill suggests trapping is a major driver of population decline, yet ODFW's findings prove that trapping is not a significant pressure point. Beavers continue to thrive and provide ecosystem benefits under existing regulations, which already mandate fine scale reporting, and seasonal harvest limitations—ensuring sustainability.

Fact-Based Wildlife Management, Not Misinformation

HB 3932 is not based on the best available beaver management science but rather misconceptions that threaten the livelihoods of landowners, conservationists, and licensed, scientifically regulated trappers. Beavers are an influential keystone species, but unchecked populations can severely damage infrastructure, agriculture, forestlands and their dams can impede instream resident and anadromous fish movement to spawning and rearing areas.

Rather than enacting non-scientifically supported reactive harvest restrictions, OTA advocates for science-backed management, continuing collaboration with ODFW, rational beaver centric conservation organizations, landowners, county and municipal governments to maintain robust beaver populations while addressing real-world challenges.

Legislators Must Reject HB 3932

The truth is clear: The emperor has no clothes. HB 3932 is based on illusion, intentionally ignores prescriptive harvest data. Lawmakers must reject this bill and instead support evidence-based conservation strategies that uphold Oregon's legacy of responsible wildlife stewardship.

Reference ODFW Furbearer Regulations and Beaver Management PRESENTATION
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