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

May 6, 2025

Members of The Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR 2025 HB 3932-A "Relating to Protecting Beavers"

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee:

Legislation such as HB 3932-A makes me hopeful that future generations will be able to point to Oregon as an exemplary protector of waterways, wildlands, and wildlife. The beaver, a keystone species, should be allowed to be an active part of this future.

Please vote YES on HB 3932-A in order that beavers can fulfill their natural role in maintaining healthy rivers, streams, and ponds. Scientists have shown that beaver eco-engineering can remedy many of our water quality issues of concern, so let us enlist the beaver to help restore the state's more than 100,000 miles of waterways categorized as impaired.

To keep the "stream doctor" on the job, so to speak, HB 3932-A will enable the ODFW Commission to prohibit persons from taking a beaver in specified watersheds or on public land within certain watersheds or near certain waters. Thus, beavers will be able to access impaired waterways where they need to be able to remain long enough to perform their stream engineering functions without getting trapped out.

I have read arguments from fur trappers opposing HB 3932-A, saying, e.g., that it is "made up tripe that is being spewed by the environmental crowd." They wrongly claim that this bill would take beaver management out of the hands of ODFW scientists. This is not the case at all. And such thinking does not show understanding of what a keystone species is, or even what an ecosystem is -- the emphasis being on system restoration, as opposed to piecemeal culling of wild animal species deemed unwanted (or valuable if harvested).

Our state's many miles of impaired waterways are in dire need of ecosystem restoration, and HB 3932-A proposes a vision to help accomplish this goal.

Summarizing the benefits of beavers wherever they thrive -- including increased wildfire resilience -- their work slows water flows; widens waterways; helps regulate water temperature; creates natural wetlands that filter water pollutants and provide drought protection; restores impacted water tables and underground aquifers; promotes native vegetation and shaded riparian areas; and creates healthy habitat not only for fish like salmon and steelhead, but also for other aquatic species and wildlife.

Restoration of salmon and other native fish is a significant benefit. A good example is the Bridge Creek Project (https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnw/pubs/pnw_rp612.pdf). The creek, a John Day tributary in Central Oregon, had become narrowed and deeply incised over many years without stable beaver populations. Crews of field scientists created beaver dam analogues to accelerate beaver dam-building, and then beavers were able to transform the incised stream into a beautifully meandering stream with a thriving riparian plant and animal population. The salmon population was restored: In fact, juvenile salmon increased by almost 180 percent!

Beaver engineering turns back time -- in a good way.

Please support HB 3932-A.

Sincerely,

DJ Fletcher
Central Point, OR

[Submitted via OLIS website testimony portal]