

Submitter: Chris Morgan
On Behalf Of: Montana Trappers Association
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Hello chair and committee,

I'm submitting my testimony here as I say through the hour and a half hearing not to be called on.

My name is Chris Morgan and I'm the VP West of the Montana Trappers Association. Seeing as Montana is a reciprocal state and we have a handful of members from the state of Oregon, I'm here to ask you to oppose 3932A, a bill that would reduce opportunities for individuals whom I represent.

There was much talk during the hearing about the benefits of beavers, but I didn't hear much about what the downsides of having unchecked beaver populations. With that being said, I'd like to share an experience of mine with you.

For the past 5 years, I have worked alongside Trout Unlimited, USFWS, and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks on a Trout Unlimited legacy project. This project has been in place for over 30 years now, and documents show 80% of spawning redds are reduced on this particular water body if just one beaver dam is present. Not only are dams barriers, but the slowed water above them allows for gravel beds above them to become silted in, rendering them useless for spawning trout and salmon species. I eliminate beaver on this waterway every year, and every year there are more. Young beaver disperse into suitable habitat every spring. If you have suitable habitat where no beavers exist you may want to ask yourself why.

I heard the talking point "only 4% of beavers statewide are taken on public lands". To me, any percentage is irrelevant. 2% of the world's population has red hair. Should those people have no rights simply because they are not the majority as well?

Lastly, beavers do little to nothing to reduce the spread of wildfire. While it's an excellent romanticized theory, it couldn't be further from the truth. Naturally, beavers select the most narrow portion of a waterway when choosing to build a dam. They do this so they are able to increase their return on effort. Any large scale fire which is detrimental to forest reproductive rate will not have any issues spanning these narrow points.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment, unfortunately it wasn't in person or remotely. I urge you DO NOT PASS 3932A

