

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee —

My name is Suze Wehr. I'm an Oregon resident and graduate student at Oregon State University studying wildlife management and environmental humanities. In my courses and projects over the past three years, I have become deeply drawn to protecting the future through ecological collaboration and forward-thinking policies. As a state (and broader world) experiencing climate change impacts at a worsening rate each year, we can't afford to ignore the solutions available to us — particularly ones we can afford and implement now, like HB 3932.

Rising temperatures and drier conditions are impacting communities all over Oregon, but beavers can play an important role in keeping water on the land year-round. They are specifically important in hydrologically connecting complex wet meadow and stream networks in places like the Ochoco National Forest and the Crooked River National Grassland. ODFW is fully aware of the critical role beavers and beaver habitat plays for supporting riparian and aquatic functioning, and thanks to strategic trapping bans in places like the NF and CRNG, this popularity has been increasing with landowners, too.

With the amount of stream/riparian restoration work occurring on the NF and CRNG, and the use and maintenance of these areas by beavers, adjacent private land owners have also become more informed about the importance of beavers and their potential to help improve the highly degraded streams associated with their properties. A great example of private land restoration efforts surrounded by National Forest is the work being implemented along Marks Creek. Marks Creek is a major drainage that parallels US Highway 26. If you travel this route today, you will see where the private landowner is actively placing logs in the stream, and has logs stockpiled and staged all along the stream. As you travel the route upstream you will also see beaver activity in and around the work that has already been accomplished. This landowner's objectives are similar to those of the Ochoco NF; they are raising their down cut degraded stream channel, restoring and recruiting hardwoods, and encouraging beaver occupancy throughout the stream reaches associated with their private land.

This has only become possible through an effective, targeted trapping ban on beavers in these critical habitats. HB 3932 isn't messing with trappers or science-based management. It's creating an opportunity our rivers and streams on public lands desperately need in order to recover. There will still be a tremendous amount of area for trappers to utilize. This bill is an opportunity to be resourceful with the options we have so that Oregonians can enjoy and depend upon our waterways for generations to come. Please support HB 3932.

Thank you,  
Suze Wehr