



Chair Golden and members of the committee,

May 8, 2025

I am writing to ask for your support of HB 3932, relating to protecting beavers. This bill aims to improve water quality by encouraging collaboration between state agencies in charge of water quality (DEQ) and wildlife management (ODFW).

Our public lands are a shared treasure that require wise stewardship through enacting policies that are supported in science and equipped to address climate resilience for future generations. The data is clear on the benefits beavers create through their natural behaviors such as dam building, digging canals and creating floodplain connections. These behaviors improve water quality through sediment retention, nutrient cycling, stream temperature reduction and removal of pollutants that impair Oregon streams.

However, these benefits are only realized when beavers are allowed to persist in a given habitat and multiply when successive generations can build on the work of their relatives. This allows for an unparalleled ecosystem function at a pace, scale and cost that is far more efficient when compared to human-based restoration efforts alone. By embracing nature-based solutions in compatibility with human-based restoration, we set ourselves up for resilient ecosystems on public land that will support a variety of uses, including: fishing, hunting, water security and water quality, which can be enjoyed by all Oregonians whether you are recreating or relying on water from public lands for your way of life.

Strategic closures are an effective and common tool for recovering fish and wildlife species that are important for harvest or habitat creation. The examples include: the closure of recreational elk harvest for 27 years in Wallowa County from 1905-1933, recreational salmon harvest closure for 20+ years in the Imnaha River in the late 70s to 2000, or recreational beaver harvest closures statewide, twice from 1899-1917 and again from 1932-1952. These conservation efforts contributed to reopening of elk, salmon and beaver harvest seasons.

This bill is not about removing rights from certain user groups, but rather, safeguarding a commonly held trust, our precious state waters. If state water quality standards are met, rules can and should be amended. A healthy watershed stands to benefit all of us by providing an abundance of sustainable resources.

In closing, I would like to add that there are several trained professionals like myself across the state that are equipped with the knowledge, funding and ability to assist landowners, municipalities and others by providing coexistence solutions, learning to live with beavers. Let's work together to support natural solutions that involve our beloved state animal.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilson
Stewardship Manager

