



NATIVE FISH SOCIETY

Advancing the Recovery of Native, Wild Fish in Their Homewaters

March 31, 2015

STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL COMMUNITIES, LAND USE, AND WATER OPPOSING HB 3217

The Native Fish Society (NFS) is a regional wild fish advocacy organization with over seven hundred members. Our mission is to protect and restore wild native fish and the habitats that sustain them.

Section one of the bill lists a number of benefits that beavers historically provided to many small streams in eastern Oregon. If this bill proposed the reintroduction of beavers to eastern Oregon streams, the Native Fish Society would be pleased to support it.

Instead, the bill would put in place a general authorization under the fill and removal laws allowing “the construction of artificial beaver dams” without an individual permit and with the apparent hope that man-made dams can provide the same ecological benefits as beaver dams. Also, the bill would exempt those dams from fish passage laws that have been in effect for decades as well as exempting the removal of trees along streams from regulation under Oregon’s Forest Practices Act if that removal is part of a restoration project.

NFS opposes the proposed pilot program to change the existing requirements for the construction of dams on small streams in the Malheur River basin. The current permitting requirements seem to be working fine and should be retained.

If landowners want to improve streams through the introduction of beavers, that can be accomplished without the need for a fill & removal permit, without triggering fish passage requirements and without the need to consider FPA restrictions on any riparian trees that the beavers may remove. To us, this is a much more logical, effective and legal way to accomplish the purposes of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to HB 3217. We would be happy to answer your questions.

Bill M. Bakke
Founder—Science and Conservation Director

Erica Stock
Executive Director

Contacts:

Erica Stock, 720.314.1219, erica@nativefishsociety.org

Jim Myron, 503.819.5589, myrons@canby.com

