



Harney County Economic Development

484 N. Broadway
Burns, OR 97720

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

RE: HB 3217

Chair Edwards, members of the committee:

Harney County Economic Development supports HB 3217 and the ecological and economic benefits it could provide for Eastern Oregon and the Malheur Basin.

Located in a sweeping valley in the northern portion of the Great Basin, Harney County is the largest county in Oregon, offering world-class recreation including skiing, fishing, hunting, hiking, and scenic beauty. The people of Harney County care deeply about the land and the recreational and economic activity that comes with our geographical location. We embrace the time-honored ideals of our rural economy, including farming and ranching, and we have built a supportive community where we learn from each other and prosper. This collaborative environment helps build our local businesses through both good and hard times. HB 3217 reflects this spirit of collaboration.

The pilot projects contemplated in HB 3217 would provide an incentive for private landowners to conduct beaver habitat restoration projects, bringing investment (with almost no cost to the state) to Harney County. HB 3217 will facilitate the return of ecological environments critical to our local recreational and agricultural economy. Creating a practical program for restoring beaver habitat can

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have wide sweeping environmental effects, both for local landowners, but also those who look to visit Harney County and spend time and money here.

HB 3217 is an excellent example of public policy that encourages private investment to achieve goals we all can agree on. Please support HB 3217 and carefully consider any changes to the current bill that could curb the ability or willingness of private investors or landowners to undertake this laudable goal. We understand the Oregon legislature's commitment to rural Oregon in 2015 and believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate that commitment.

Thank you,

Randy Fulton

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