



Oregon

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**To: The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**



**House Bill 2844 and 2844 -2
Dr. Doug Cottam, Wildlife Division Administrator
Derek Broman, Furbearer and Carnivore Program Coordinator
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

The department appreciates the opportunity to discuss House Bill 2844 with you today, and has no position on the bill.

HB 2844 removes beaver from the list of animals defined in ORS 610.002. Predatory animals listed in this statute are not defined here based on taxonomic status such as carnivores that catch and eat prey but rather a recognition of the damage they cause to property, livestock, and/or crops.

Section 1 of HB 2844 effectively moves the management of beaver from Department of Agriculture's authority to Department of Fish and Wildlife. Specifically, the authority around control and funding designated to address beaver causing damage on private lands.

Currently, the Department of Fish and Wildlife works with federal, tribal, state, county, and municipal partners as well as private landowners to oversee beaver management and harvest. Harvest is regulated through the Oregon furbearer regulations, where any take of beaver must be conducted by a licensed trapper or hunter and their activities reported.

The department does receive dozens of calls each month from landowners and land management agencies that have active beaver on their land, and the agency has developed materials to provide information on preventing negative interactions and harm to property including use of nonlethal measures, with the goal of seeking long-term solutions to conflict, raising human tolerance for beavers, and educating the public on the importance of beaver to Oregon.

Section 7 of HB 2844 requires the department to develop rules. The department does have rules in place for management of furbearers and native wildlife, as well as requirements that any take of Oregon wildlife require a license or permit. However, the additional subsections in section 7 would require that the Commission adopt specific rules that require reasonable attempts to relocate beaver

prior to any lethal removal, notification to the department within 24 hours that a beaver was lethally removed and failure to do so results in revocation of having permits.

The department has a Beaver Relocation Guide that establishes the necessary steps and requirements to facilitate beaver relocation. In the Guide, animal welfare is prioritized and we do not want to put beaver in situations where relocation will be unsuccessful or will create conflict with humans or other beaver. The Guide is clear that beavers present a disease risk to other beavers and human health. Beavers can be infected with the bacterial disease *Tularemia*, which is fatal to animals and is transmitted to them by ticks, biting flies and via contaminated water. They are also capable of transmitting other zoonotic diseases, including *Giardiasis* to other mammals including humans. Therefore, any relocation of beaver must adhere to the conditions in the Guide, including careful review of the relocation habitat, proximity to human development, and require health certification to reduce risk of disease exposure (which requires pre-relocation capture and holding during the testing period).

HB 2844 as introduced does not provide for any type of emergency authorization for lethal removal to address acute issues, such as threats to human safety, road impacts, or loss of high-value commercial trees. Beavers are industrious and can cause significant impairment to infrastructure, or take down several trees in one night.

HB 2844 -2 addresses the issues around emergency authorizations, reporting times and recognizes the importance of nonlethal, preventive efforts.

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