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I am opposed to HB 2844.

As a farmer in the Willamette Valley beaver management is a critical part of keeping our property and crops safe. The state of Oregon currently categorizes beavers as a rodent and it needs to stay that way. These animals can cause extensive damage to properties and farmland by building dams that can flood fields or roadways, block culverts, and even alter water ways.

My right as a landowner is to be able to address these issues if they arise in a timely manner. The state is suggesting that we try implementing other methods of deterrents before requesting a permit to take lethal action. This may include creating a barrier around your property, relocating the beaver, or using air cannons. Depending on where your property or farmland is located your options may be limited. Using an air cannon next to a large neighborhood isn't an option, unless you want some very angry neighbors. Another suggestion is to relocate the beavers to a new location. This is a short-term fix because eventually new beavers will move in causing you to have to repeat the process. It has even been shown that this can transfer diseases amongst beaver colonies.

Having the option of taking lethal action against these animals is the most cost effective for the property owner. If we have to set up barriers or fences around our fields or crops it can cost up to thousands of dollars not including the maintenance this will require. These barriers will also get in the way of tree maintenance of cutting suckers, applying chemicals, and greatly affect harvest.

There is no evidence showing that their numbers are dropping and that they need additional protection. Given their size and habitat they have very few natural predators. Beavers can live up to ten years in the wild. They like to live in colonies and can include up to 12 other beavers in one den!

In 2014, we planted 30 acres of hazelnut trees. That following winter the water level raised and the beavers came in and took out 68 trees in three days to make their dam. We hired a professional trapper and he took 5 beavers off of our property. We were lucky to catch them in time, saving hundreds of trees. This could have been disastrous if we weren't allowed to act quickly.

We do not trap beaver for sport. We only utilize this tool when our farmlands are being impacted by these rodents. The beavers that we removed from our property didn't go to waste. We had them professionally tanned and now we have their pelts in our homes.

I need to maintain the ability to manage predatory species as needed to protect my farm – the state should not eliminate tools, especially with no sound scientific basis to do so. I urge you to OPPOSE HB 2844.

George Meyer