

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Board of Commissioners Office



ST. HELENS, OR 97051

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Re: Opposition to HB2844

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

Columbia County is home to 14 Drainage Districts, hundreds of stream miles, 1,897 culverts maintained by the county, and many others maintained by ODOT, Drainage Districts, Cities and private landowners. Beaver create constant maintenance issues for public and private landowners. If dams are not removed flooding occurs; taking out roadways, creating driving hazards, and damaging property. Beaver damage riparian areas and levees resulting in erosion, stream sedimentation, and flooding.

Despite the damage that beaver may do, they can also have a positive impact on our environment. In many of our forested areas their dams create pools that are home to a variety of wildlife and provide a spawning and resting area for our anadromous salmon. They add woody debris and detritus to streams, which enhances the food supply, creates nesting for birds, and fosters biologically productive ecosystems.

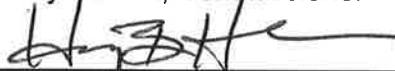
HB2844 proposes to remove the classification of beavers as rodents, which is their taxonomic classification and as such should be maintained rather than changed in Oregon statute. This bill also proposes creating a permitting process which will be a roadblock for landowners to address the problem beavers in a timely manner. This bill also proposes relocation of beaver, which is a questionable form of management since it only moves the problem to another area. Any relocation must be based on adequate study to avoid unintended consequences.

The co-existence of humans and wildlife requires management that works to achieve a balance; finding a harmony that best serves both species. This bill does not achieve that end. Please oppose HB2844.

Sincerely,


Margaret Magruder, Chair


Casey Garrett, Commissioner


Henry Heimuller, Commissioner