

Submitter: Wally Sykes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB3464

Chair Marsh, Committee Members:

We all recognize that Oregon along with other Western states is experiencing a cycle of recurrent droughts interspersed with recurrent floods of unprecedented severity. The Global Commission on the Economics of Water recently stated, "We now face the prospect of a 40% shortfall in freshwater supply by 2030, with severe shortages in water-constrained regions." Much of Oregon now falls within a water-constrained region.

For eons, beaver have developed and maintained a complex system of ponds, channels, wetlands, and riparian zones that defined much of the water geography of the West. This system checked floods, controlled the timed release of water in streams, rivers and watersheds, ensured water retention in ponds and wetlands, and guaranteed water temperatures and food supplies in riparian zones that support rich biodiversity and fish habitat.

Most of this system has been destroyed over the last 200 years and the beaver population is today a small fraction of its former size. Wildlife and fish populations are in ever more dire condition. Humans are suffering great loss from drought and flood. Since we are in a water emergency of global proportion, it seems desirable to encourage restoration of beaver on the land and the consequent redevelopment of the ancient and efficient (and cost-free) hydraulic dynamic they created.

Oregon beaver are classed as predators, exempt from ODFW management on private lands, where they are subject to unregulated killing. No records are kept of beaver populations or the number killed. Changing beaver classification from predator to furbearer would allow ODFW to manage them holistically and scientifically, and to allow beaver resurgence where it can benefit us all by vastly improving Oregon's water landscape.

Changing the classification would not prohibit problem beaver from being removed from private land if necessary, since ODFW already has a permit system in place for furbearers.

Please do all Oregon a vital favor, and support HB3464.

Thank you.

Wally Sykes
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