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Representative Marsh and member of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

I am a member of the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council Board, and a Cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now. However, I write today in neither capacity, but simply as myself. As most of you probably know, I generally offer testimony on bills relating to the climate crisis. Today I write in reference to a bill that has less climate relevance than most on which I comment except that the beaver is an incredibly valuable animal in terms of its role in water management and conservation – critical adaptation considerations as climate change increases drought risk.

In 2010, I retired after 30 plus years teaching biology, mostly at Southeast Missouri State University. During those years, I taught ecology, conservation biology, environmental science and process of science. Since retiring and relocating to Oregon, I have been consistently amused by the way Oregon deals with the state animal – the Beaver. It makes perfect sense to me for *Castor canadensis* to be defined as a fur-bearing mammal. However, it has never made any sense to me that in Oregon the term ‘predator’ should have a very different meaning than it has throughout the rest of the world – and especially the world of biology. I have searched high and low for anywhere outside Oregon statute that ‘predator’ could possibly be used to describe beaver. Every definition that I have seen is consistent with my understanding: the term refers to an animal that eats other animals. On the other hand, the beaver diet comprises tubers, shoots, buds, foliage, roots, stems, barks, twigs and other plant substances.

For this reason, I applaud HB3464 which correctly removes the beaver from the miscategorized list of predators.

However, just as the beaver is not a predator, neither can the term predator be used accurately to describe ‘birds that are or may be destructive to agricultural crops.’ My sense of what the term ‘crop’ means confines this to plants. As I search for a definition that includes animals, I do not find one. Additionally, including rodents in the list of predators also requires a huge suspension of disbelief because rodents are almost universally herbivorous. The one exception to that principle of which I am aware is the Grasshopper mouse, which, indeed - and as its name implies - eats grasshoppers. This wee beastie, therefore, is a genuine predator.

If the effort that stimulated HB3464 is to clean up Oregon statutes so the term predator is used correctly, then I recommend HB3464 be amended to complete the clean up as identified above. If, however, the purpose is simply to save our state animal from the ignominy of being mischaracterized in statute, then I can happily applaud and support the effort.

Thank you all for your service and efforts in the legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Journet". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

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