



To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon

Re: Testimony in support of HB 3464

Testimony Submitted On behalf of all the OCN Member Organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon, Association of Oregon Recyclers, Audubon Society of Portland, Beyond Toxics, Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Central Oregon LandWatch, Climate Solutions, Defenders of Wildlife, Deschutes River Alliance, Engineers for a Sustainable Future, The Environmental Center, Environment Oregon, Food & Water Watch, Friends of Mount Hood, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of Family Farmers, Greater Hells Canyon Council, League of Women Voters of Oregon, Native Fish Society, Neighbors for Clean Air, Oceana, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Land and Water Alliance, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, Oregon Wild, Pew Charitable Trusts, Renewable Northwest, Rogue Riverkeeper, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, The Street Trust, Surfrider Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Tualatin Riverkeepers, WaterWatch of Oregon, The Wetlands Conservancy, Wild Salmon Center, Zero Coalition

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy and Members of the Committee

On behalf of Oregon League of Conservation Voters and Oregon Conservation Network, I submit this testimony in support of HB 3464 that removes beavers from the “predatory animal” statute.

The ecological and ecosystem benefits of beavers have been well documented. They are referred to as “nature’s engineers” for their ability to modify their habitat in ways that help several other species, including salmon. It is becoming increasingly known that beavers also provide benefits to human communities and increase our resilience to climate change impacts such as wildfires and droughts – two problems that are very prevalent in Oregon.

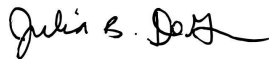
Yet, as a state, we have provided little to no support to this species so they can continue to build our climate resilience. Because of their classification as a “predatory animal” there is no population monitoring on private lands and no understanding of how many beavers are being killed in the state, and how that might be affecting our ecosystems.

Instead of focusing on only the potential damage beavers might cause, we are urging you to also account for their benefits – from water quality and accessibility, to stream temperature regulation and wildfire breaks. These benefits warrant that we do more for beavers in the Beaver State.

HB 3464 is a step toward acknowledging beaver’s role in Oregon’s landscape by making informed management decisions on beaver take. The bill does NOT prevent landowners from killing beavers in response to damage but rather it will give landowners the opportunity and information on attempting voluntary mitigation, if they choose to.

I urge this Committee to think of beavers as a tool in our toolbox to fight climate change impacts – both on natural as well as on human communities. Killing animals without any accountability does not set a good precedent for wildlife management in the state. Please fix this erroneous classification of beavers under Oregon statute so we can all benefit from having beavers on our landscape and be proud of calling ourselves the beaver state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia B. DeGraw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia B. DeGraw

Coalition Director

Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters