

Written Testimony of Joseph Vaile, Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

Public Hearing: House Bills 3464

Wednesday, March 21, 2023

3:00 p.m.

Chairwoman Marsh, Vice-Chairs Levy, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bills (HB) 3464. This bill includes important measures to prepare our communities from climate change by restoring beaver and enhancing ecosystem climate resilience. We strongly urge the committee to report out this important bill.

My name is Joseph Vaile, and I am the Climate Program Director for the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center. We are based in southwest Oregon. We have nearly 10,000 members and supporters, most of which reside in Oregon's Rogue River Basin. KS Wild launched a Climate Program in 2019 to address the increasing threats posed by climate change to the region. Our program proactively engages with local communities, allies, and decision makers in order to advance natural climate solutions.

HB 3464 will simplify beaver management by making Oregon's primary wildlife agency, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the lead agency for improved and better informed beaver management. It will ensure that we are collecting data about beaver populations and hunting and trapping numbers to make informed management decisions. It will also aid landowners with guidance on beaver coexistence.

The North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) is a keystone species and ecosystem engineer. By building small dams, beaver create wetlands and open water that can ease the impact of climate change. Beaver activity can lessen the impacts of persistent drought, increased wildfire occurrence, and other climate change induced impacts. Beaver ponds can also reduce sedimentation and filter other pollutants. By raising the water table, beaver can help ensure water is available in dry summer months.

Beaver ponds also reduce the threat of wildfire by creating persistent wet habitat and expanding riparian areas. In southwest Oregon, where we live and work, this is especially important to communities still reeling from the impacts of successive seasons with extreme wildfire occurrence.

Consequently, KS Wild strongly supports HB 3464 and urges the Committee to report out this legislation. We look forward to working with the State and other partners to restore beaver populations and ensure non-lethal measures are readily available to landowners.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joseph Vaile

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