

I am testifying as a landowner in support of House Bill 3464, removing the “predatory animal” designation for beavers and opening the path for dialogue with landowners such as myself and the opportunity for fish and wildlife managers to better understand and manage of our state animal.

Beavers by their very nature, create and alter habitats on a scale that has helped form some of the most productive and diverse habitats on the planet. However, their work can be viewed as unfavorable when it is in the context of shared resources or land uses. This is why it is important that we take a closer look at this relationship. As a keystone species, beavers create a myriad of benefits for fish, wildlife and human populations as well. Beaver-ponded habitat support nurseries for juvenile salmon and steelhead and keep water on the landscape longer, an advantage that benefits all forms of life, including humans.

HB 3464 seeks to connect landowners with solutions to living with beaver, while not removing any private landowner rights. This bill proposes to open communication and improve understanding and opportunities to learn about the benefits of living with beavers and why choosing coexistence is often a better long-term solution.

There are tools and funds to assist landowners in achieving their goals while minimizing impacts from beavers. These include fencing trees or using paint with sand to discourage chewing/felling trees, installing culvert fencing to preserve the function of culverts without removing beavers and using pond levelers to maintain an acceptable pond height for humans and beavers alike.

A better understanding of beaver populations is needed in order to improve management strategies. Reporting take similar to other forms of harvest, will equip fish and wildlife managers with resources to better assist a broad demographic of Oregonians. Beaver habitats across the state have an incredible degree of variability. HB 3464 will give fish and wildlife managers greater flexibility to respond to this diversity of habitats and beaver/human interactions.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilson