



TO: House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment  
FROM: Quinn Read, Center for Biological Diversity  
DATE: March 22, 2023  
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3464 – Protecting beavers to mitigate climate change effects

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On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity, we respectfully submit the following comments in support of HB 3464, which would remove beavers from the list of so-called “predatory” animals. The Center is a nonprofit, public interest environmental organization dedicated to the protection of imperiled species and the habitat and climate they need to survive. The Center is supported by more than 1.7 million members and online activists throughout the country, including 32,000 members and activists in Oregon. We strongly support HB 3464 because it represents an important step toward reforming Oregon’s problematic predatory animal statute.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is charged with protecting and enhancing Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. This includes broad authority to regulate the amounts and manner of taking wildlife. However, under current law (ORS 498.162) the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission is prevented from regulating the take of “predatory” animals, including coyotes and the state animal, beavers. Current law (ORS Chapter 610) defines “predatory” animals unscientifically and delegates regulatory authority over these animals to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. As noted above, this creates confusion and inconsistency in developing and administering rules and regulations. It removes the management of an entire category of wildlife from the state agency with the most relevant experience and expertise. And it hampers the ability of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Department of Fish and Wildlife from doing their job effectively and for the benefit of all Oregonians.

The inclusion of beavers in the list of “predatory” animals is particularly egregious. Not only does it not make sense from a scientific or a good wildlife management perspective – it deprives Oregonians of the many benefits of healthy, thriving populations of beavers on the landscape. Beavers are a keystone species and are our natural allies in the fight to mitigate the impacts of climate change. For example, beaver-modified habitat enhances fire resiliency and creates climate refugia for other species. Beavers also improve water security, sequesters carbon, and creates healthy habitat for salmon. Including beavers in the list of predatory animals means that they can be killed with little to no regulation or monitoring in Oregon – the Beaver State.

Please support HB 3465 as an important step toward reforming our state’s problematic predatory animal statute.

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