



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
RE: HB 3464

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

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing 10,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission statement is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we have a strong history of advocating for science-based wildlife management.

OHA opposes HB 3464 and the removal of beavers from the predatory animal statutes and the definition of rodent.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is vested the authority for regulation of predatory animals as defined in ORS 610.002. The predatory animal designation is tied to the destruction of agricultural crops, products, and activities and therefore the regulating entity is correctly identified as ODA. Beavers, while valuable on the landscape, can cause an enormous amount of damage to agricultural crops and products in a very short amount of time. As such, landowners must have the ability to control beavers when they are being destructive to agricultural crops, products, and activities, as stated in the statute.

HB3464's request to remove beavers from this statute transfers both the authority and the workload from ODA to Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) and raises the question of what, if any, definitive issues or concerns warrant a change? If the concern is to increase the reporting structure around landowner take of damage-causing beavers, could that be accomplished under the current ODA authority without transferring the workload to another agency?

ODFW currently has multiple large-scale wildlife and conversation management projects in process, such as the mule deer management plan revision and increased sampling and testing for Chronic Wasting Disease. In addition to the rule-making process, the increase in staff time needed to interface with landowners and producers to deal with issues associated with the destruction of agricultural crops and products would, by necessity, reduce the amount of time available to focus on wildlife management and conservation efforts.

Currently, ODFW staff is operating at capacity in each of its divisions to fulfill their mandated requirements relating to wildlife and fisheries management and conservation. OHA is gravely concerned that adding ODA's workload related to agricultural crop and product damage would slow or halt the important work ODFW staff is currently undertaking.

OHA urges the committee to consider working within the current structure of the predatory animal statutes and ODA's current framework to reach solutions to concerns about reporting data and non-lethal interventions. Removing a rodent from the definition of 'rodent' and removing an animal that causes destruction of agricultural crops, products, and activities from a statute designated to deal with exactly such an animal does not solve problems; it only moves those problems to landowners and to a different agency.

Thank you,

Amy Patrick
Policy Director