

Submitter: Scott R Bowler
On Behalf Of: Beavers
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: HB3464

As a life-long environmental educator and citizen scientist, I have long held a special affinity for beavers and their absolutely vital role in ecosystems. Indeed, there is NO other animal that has so positive an effect on flood mitigation, wetland creation, water table enhancement and creation of rich fish, bird, and mammal habitat. None.

Since the near extirpation of beaver in the 19th century, we have seen increasing stream erosion, drying out of vital riparian zones, destruction of thousands of acres of rich wildlife and fish habitat, lowered water tables leading to reduced water for farming and ranching, and increased forest fires. It is not hyperbolic to say that beavers provide THE vital key to climate change mitigation and habitat creation. I've worked on many miles of stream restoration projects over decades, all with an eye to creating enough habitat to invite beaver back onto the landscape so that they can improve on our efforts and get the rehabilitation projects right. There are many examples of this in Oregon already, and many agencies are working to rehabilitate wetlands as I write this—often by building beaver dam analogs and planting forage species in hopes of inviting beavers back!

There are many ways “problem” beavers can be controlled in areas where they may be causing damage to crops or infrastructure, but killing them should not be one of them. If the monies and energies expended to kill beaver were instead redirected and spent on live trapping and transplanting families of “problem” beaver to areas where conditions exist to support them, we would all benefit in the long run: fish and wildlife, ranchers and farmers, foresters, sportsmen, as well as us “tree hugging” nature lovers. Please pass this bill and let's let the beavers get back to work!