



February 2, 2024

The Wetlands Conservancy is writing in support of HB 4014. We are grateful to the legislature that passed HB 3464 in 2023 which removed the predatory animal status of beavers and shifted management on private lands from the Department of Agriculture to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Under this new classification landowners have more opportunities to consider non-lethal mitigation tools and techniques should they want to. The Wetlands Conservancy is a 43-year-old land trust and a landowner in Oregon with many beaver co-existence success stories. This bill would encourage landowners to use more co-existence tools which in turn upholds the many benefits that beaver created wetlands provide, including flood water storage, water quality benefits, and habitat for wildlife. TWC has been using coexistence measures on our properties for some time, and we are excited to share these management techniques with others, but with limited funding and education that is very difficult.

HB 4014 will allow SWCD's/nonprofits/watershed councils to help landowners interested in coexistence strategies, but who are hindered by lack of technical know-how and financial barriers. While great beaver coexistence tools exist, not every tool will fit every unique situation and we have seen harmful fixes by well-meaning practitioners that in turn worsen the infrastructure issues we see from beaver-human conflict. Currently, Oregon lacks capacity in terms of individuals who are trained and knowledgeable about the proper techniques. HB 4014 allows for some of the funds to be used to build our state's capacity in providing technical assistance to landowners.

The Wetlands Conservancy works with cities, partner agencies, other nonprofits, and private landowners on finding better coexistence methods and have found that with a little education and assistance on getting coexistence devices installed, we have changed the way people see beaver. While considered a "pest" in some areas, beavers are vital to wetland health, creating habitat for the recovery of endangered and sensitive species such as salmon and amphibians that rely on these beaver habitats for critical life stages.

Wetlands are beaver habitats, and the presence of beavers has been proven to recharge groundwater, enhance fire resiliency, create climate refugia for other species, improve water quality and support healthy habitat for salmon. The Wetlands Conservancy urges the legislature to pass HB 4014 in support of landowners seeking co-existence resources to ensure that beavers are allowed to do their important work here in the Beaver State.

Sincerely,

Katie Ryan

Executive Director
The Wetlands Conservancy