



PO Box 193
Jacksonville, OR 97530

February 5, 2024

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Chair Representative Marsh

RE: House Bill 4014

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

If we want to increase water security and habitat resiliency, there is no more efficient use of funds than the proposed House Bill 4014. Granted, we may be biased in this assertion (our logo alone suggests an appreciation for these indigenous ecosystem engineers), nevertheless we challenge anyone to come up with a better use of funds that support our climate and environment.

Consider these points:

- Beavers have been stewarding these waterways for millions of years and science has proven out what common sense (and those who are still on the land) tell us—beavers reduce the severity of floods, droughts and wildfires while increasing water quality, water quantity, carbon sequestration and habitat for fish and wildlife. They solve these problems better than humans.
- Beavers build this resiliency for free. All that is required of us is to show some restraint in killing them when they annoy us or bring the wilds in too close to our houses, crops and infrastructure.
- Trapping beavers in beaver habitat only “kicks the can down the road.” More will move in and if the new beaver family is also trapped (and so on), this one site becomes a population sink that drains the surrounding lands of beavers. Everyone suffers; the landowner on the reactive trapping treadmill, neighbors who can’t establish beavers while there is a black hole in the area’s beaver population, the habitat and (of course) the beavers themselves.
- Conversely, when a landowner is empowered to step off this treadmill of reactive trapping and coexist with a family of beavers, everyone benefits.
- We can solve problems beavers create using coexistence tools like pond levelers and culvert protection systems, crop protection with electric fences or simple caging around trees. The most complicated of these solutions cost about \$5,000 each, which can be prohibitive for landowners.
- While that price is often too much for a landowner to pay, this is “budget dust” compared to what we are spending on the restoration industrial complex. With the support of HB 4014, landowners get a stable solution and Oregonians get another family of beavers building water security and habitat resiliency in our land base. In this case, the difference between a “black hole” in beaver habitat vs a resilient ecosystem is really just a few thousand dollars.

We ask for your support of House Bill 4014 on behalf of those downstream.

Sincerely,

Jakob Shockey, Executive Director