

House Bill 3143

Sponsored by Representatives MARSH, OWENS, Senator GORSEK, Representative BOWMAN; Representatives ANDERSEN, EVANS, GAMBA, KROPF, LEVY B, LEVY E, PHAM H, WALTERS, Senator FREDERICK (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act allows agencies to award moneys under a grant program related to living with beavers on private land. The Act directs an agency and a committee to report on the grant program. The Act gives moneys to the agency for the grant program. The Act goes into effect on the 91st day after the 2025 session ends. (Flesch Readability Score: 62.3).

Establishes the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program Subaccount in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. Authorizes the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to award block grants from the subaccount under the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program, on recommendations from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Directs the department and the committee to jointly report on the grant program to committees or interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the environment on or before September 15, 2027.

Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the department for deposit in the subaccount for purposes related to the grant program.

Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to fostering coexistence with beavers; creating new provisions; amending ORS 496.252 and
3 496.254; and prescribing an effective date.

4 Whereas the beaver is a keystone species that serves as nature's engineer and the beavers'
5 habitat has the ability to provide refugia, stimulate the recovery of other species and foster
6 resilience on landscapes impacted by climate change; and

7 Whereas beavers play a significant role in increasing the quantity and quality of water on a
8 landscape and decreasing the risk of wildfire; and

9 Whereas private landowners can have substantive positive impacts on beaver populations and
10 the condition of beaver habitat in Oregon; now, therefore,

11 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

LANDOWNERS LIVING WITH BEAVERS GRANT PROGRAM

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15 **SECTION 1.** ORS 496.252 is amended to read:

16 496.252. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is established in the State Treasury,
17 separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Oregon Conservation and Re-
18 creation Fund shall be credited to the fund.

19 (2) Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the State Department of Fish and
20 Wildlife to carry out activities that serve to protect, maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resources
21 in Oregon. The activities for which the department may expend fund moneys include, but are not
22 limited to:

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (a) Promoting the health of Oregon’s ecosystems and fish and wildlife species by implementing
 2 conservation programs and strategies identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, as defined in
 3 ORS 541.890, including conservation programs and strategies for the nearshore identified in the
 4 marine component of the Oregon Conservation Strategy;

5 (b) Improving engagement of the public in hunting and fishing opportunities and in other outdoor
 6 recreation opportunities related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;

7 (c) Improving educational outreach and engagement of the public, including diverse and under-
 8 served communities, related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;

9 (d) Engaging in, and providing funding for, joint projects of the department and the State Parks
 10 and Recreation Department or other state agencies as recommended by the Oregon Conservation
 11 and Recreation Advisory Committee established under ORS 496.254; and

12 (e) Other conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, enforcement, outdoor re-
 13 creation or education activities.

14 (3) The fund shall consist of:

15 (a) Moneys appropriated to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for deposit in the fund
 16 or otherwise transferred to the fund;

17 (b) Gifts, grants, contributions or other donations for use as described in subsection (2) of this
 18 section, that are received by the department from any public or private source and caused to be
 19 deposited and credited to the fund; [*and*]

20 (c) Moneys in the subaccount described in subsection (4) of this section[.]; **and**

21 **(d) Moneys in the subaccount described in subsection (5) of this section.**

22 (4) The Private Forest Accord Mitigation Subaccount is established in the fund. The subaccount
 23 shall consist of moneys appropriated to the department for deposit in the subaccount or otherwise
 24 transferred to the subaccount and gifts, grants, contributions or other donations that are received
 25 by the department from any public or private source and caused to be deposited and credited to the
 26 subaccount. Moneys in the subaccount may be used for:

27 (a) The purposes described in, and the administration of, ORS 496.257.

28 (b) Conducting outreach to persons that own or operate an artificial obstruction, as defined in
 29 ORS 509.580, to further the goal of fish passage.

30 (c) Conducting outreach to persons that may undertake projects described in ORS 496.257.

31 **(5) The Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program Subaccount is established in the**
 32 **fund. The subaccount shall consist of moneys appropriated to the department for deposit in**
 33 **the subaccount or otherwise transferred to the subaccount and gifts, grants, contributions**
 34 **or other donations that are received by the department from any public or private source**
 35 **and caused to be deposited and credited to the subaccount. Moneys in the subaccount may**
 36 **be used for the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program under which the department**
 37 **undertakes the following, on recommendations from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation**
 38 **Advisory Committee:**

39 (a) **Awarding block grants to eligible applicants, including watershed councils, soil and**
 40 **water conservation districts and nonprofit organizations, of not more than \$50,000 in each**
 41 **grant cycle, to support beaver coexistence projects on private land that quickly and effi-**
 42 **ciently mitigate the effects of beavers that live on, or regularly visit, the private land, in-**
 43 **cluding:**

44 **(A) Tree protection tools;**

45 **(B) Flood prevention flow devices;**

1 (C) Culvert and infrastructure protection systems;

2 (D) Crop protection strategies;

3 (E) Landowner education and outreach; and

4 (F) Training related to mitigating the effects of beavers;

5 (b) Providing statewide technical assistance to develop and expand skills and strategies
6 for coexisting with beavers; and

7 (c) Authorizing and administering the expenditures described in this subsection.

8 [(5)] (6) The department and the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee shall
9 jointly submit a biennial report to the Legislative Assembly as provided in ORS 293.640 regarding
10 the expenditure of moneys deposited in the fund, other than moneys deposited in the Private Forest
11 Accord Mitigation Subaccount, **and including moneys deposited in the Landowners Living with
12 Beavers Grant Program Subaccount**, and on the status of various activities funded by the mon-
13 eys.

14 [(6)] (7) The department and the Private Forest Accord Mitigation Advisory Committee shall
15 jointly submit a biennial report to the Legislative Assembly as provided in ORS 293.640 regarding
16 the expenditure of moneys deposited in the Private Forest Accord Mitigation Subaccount and on the
17 status of various activities funded by the moneys.

18 **SECTION 2.** ORS 496.252, as amended by section 66, chapter 33, Oregon Laws 2022, is amended
19 to read:

20 496.252. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is established in the State Treasury,
21 separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Oregon Conservation and Re-
22 creation Fund shall be credited to the fund.

23 (2) Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the State Department of Fish and
24 Wildlife to carry out activities that serve to protect, maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resources
25 in Oregon. The activities for which the department may expend fund moneys include, but are not
26 limited to:

27 (a) Promoting the health of Oregon’s ecosystems and fish and wildlife species by implementing
28 conservation programs and strategies identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, as defined in
29 ORS 541.890, including conservation programs and strategies for the nearshore identified in the
30 marine component of the Oregon Conservation Strategy;

31 (b) Improving engagement of the public in hunting and fishing opportunities and in other outdoor
32 recreation opportunities related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;

33 (c) Improving educational outreach and engagement of the public, including diverse and under-
34 served communities, related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;

35 (d) Engaging in, and providing funding for, joint projects of the department and the State Parks
36 and Recreation Department or other state agencies as recommended by the Oregon Conservation
37 and Recreation Advisory Committee established under ORS 496.254; and

38 (e) Other conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, enforcement, outdoor re-
39 creation or education activities.

40 (3) The fund shall consist of:

41 (a) Moneys appropriated to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for deposit in the fund
42 or otherwise transferred to the fund; *[and]*

43 (b) Gifts, grants, contributions or other donations for use as described in subsection (2) of this
44 section, that are received by the department from any public or private source and caused to be
45 deposited and credited to the fund[.]; **and**

1 (c) Moneys in the subaccount described in subsection (4) of this section.

2 (4) The Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program Subaccount is established in the
 3 fund. The subaccount shall consist of moneys appropriated to the department for deposit in
 4 the subaccount or otherwise transferred to the subaccount and gifts, grants, contributions
 5 or other donations that are received by the department from any public or private source
 6 and caused to be deposited and credited to the subaccount. Moneys in the subaccount may
 7 be used for the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program under which the department
 8 undertakes the following, on recommendations from the committee:

9 (a) Awarding block grants to eligible applicants, including watershed councils, soil and
 10 water conservation districts and nonprofit organizations, of not more than \$50,000 in each
 11 grant cycle, to support beaver coexistence projects on private land that quickly and effi-
 12 ciently mitigate the effects of beavers that live on, or regularly visit, the private land, in-
 13 cluding:

14 (A) Tree protection tools;

15 (B) Flood prevention flow devices;

16 (C) Culvert and infrastructure protection systems;

17 (D) Crop protection strategies;

18 (E) Landowner education and outreach; and

19 (F) Training related to mitigating the effects of beavers;

20 (b) Providing statewide technical assistance to develop and expand skills and strategies
 21 for coexisting with beavers; and

22 (c) Authorizing and administering the expenditures described in this subsection.

23 [(4)] (5) The department and the [*Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory*] committee shall
 24 jointly submit a biennial report to the Legislative Assembly as provided in ORS 293.640 regarding
 25 the expenditure of moneys deposited in the fund, **including moneys deposited in the Landowners**
 26 **Living with Beavers Grant Program Subaccount**, and on the status of various activities funded
 27 by the moneys.

28 **SECTION 3.** ORS 496.254 is amended to read:

29 496.254. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee is established as an
 30 advisory committee to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Department of Fish and
 31 Wildlife for the purpose of carrying out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The
 32 commission shall determine the number of members of the committee and the geographical repre-
 33 sentation by the members. The Governor shall appoint the members of the committee. The Associate
 34 Director of Outdoor Recreation, or the associate director's designee, shall serve as a nonvoting, ex
 35 officio member.

36 (2) The committee shall:

37 (a) Review department policies regarding the use of Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund
 38 moneys, other than policies regarding the use of Private Forest Accord Mitigation Subaccount
 39 moneys, and make recommendations to the commission and the department regarding the use of fund
 40 moneys for implementing and administering department activities.

41 (b) **Make recommendations to the department on expenditures under the Landowners**
 42 **Living with Beavers Grant Program, as described in ORS 496.252 (5).**

43 (3) Members of the committee may not receive compensation for service as members. However,
 44 subject to any applicable law regulating travel and other expenses of state officers and employees,
 45 a member may be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the

1 performance of official duties from moneys available to the department for the purpose of re-
2 imbursement of committee members.

3 **SECTION 4.** ORS 496.254, as amended by section 67, chapter 33, Oregon Laws 2022, is amended
4 to read:

5 496.254. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee is established as an
6 advisory committee to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Department of Fish and
7 Wildlife for the purpose of carrying out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The
8 commission shall determine the number of members of the committee and the geographical repre-
9 sentation by the members. The Governor shall appoint the members of the committee. The Associate
10 Director of Outdoor Recreation, or the associate director’s designee, shall serve as a nonvoting, ex
11 officio member.

12 (2) The committee shall:

13 (a) Review department policies regarding the use of Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund
14 moneys and make recommendations to the commission and the department regarding the use of fund
15 moneys for implementing and administering department activities.

16 (b) **Make recommendations to the department on expenditures under the Landowners
17 Living with Beavers Grant Program, as described in ORS 496.252 (4).**

18 (3) Members of the committee may not receive compensation for service as members. However,
19 subject to any applicable law regulating travel and other expenses of state officers and employees,
20 a member may be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the
21 performance of official duties from moneys available to the department for the purpose of re-
22 imbursement of committee members.

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24 **REPORT ON THE GRANT PROGRAM**

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26 **SECTION 5.** On or before September 15, 2027, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife
27 and the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee shall jointly submit a re-
28 port, in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, to the committees or interim committees of
29 the Legislative Assembly related to the environment on the expenditures of moneys under
30 the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program described in ORS 496.252, including the
31 status and outcomes of activities funded under the grant program.

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33 **APPROPRIATION**

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35 **SECTION 6.** (1) In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-
36 priated to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025,
37 out of the General Fund, the amount of \$1,500,000, for deposit in the Landowners Living with
38 Beavers Grant Program Subaccount in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for
39 purposes related to the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program.

40 (2) Up to \$95,000 of the amount described in subsection (1) of this section may be used
41 for the costs of administering the grant program.

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43 **CAPTIONS**

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45 **SECTION 7.** The unit captions used in this 2025 Act are provided only for the convenience

1 of the reader and do not become part of the statutory law of this state or express any leg-
2 islative intent in the enactment of this 2025 Act.

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EFFECTIVE DATE

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6 **SECTION 8.** This 2025 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2025
7 regular session of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.

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