

HB 3143

2/2/2025

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Committee Members,

My name is Terri Preeg Riggsby and I am in favor of House Bill 3143.

I have been volunteering for nearly 25 years with watershed residents throughout the Portland metropolitan area to improve wildlife habitat, including understanding the positive impacts that beavers have on our local ecosystems. I have shared how to live in harmony with beavers, particularly along our smaller and sometimes ephemeral creeks in more urban areas with smaller properties.

I live in southwest Portland on the border of Beaverton in a neighborhood that is home to several coyote packs and other mammals and birds, a small creek, and hundreds of trees of various types and ages.

About three years ago a tree fell on a new neighbor's house as a result of beaver activity. The family had recently moved into the neighborhood the tree had landed on their children's bedroom. The parents were scared and angry and they wanted the beaver gone as soon as possible. They were soliciting neighbors for financial assistance to hire someone to trap and exterminate the beaver.

I explained the value of beaver activity and that planning ahead with tree caging or meshing can be very effective at reducing potential impacts to trees near homes.

The family responded that they didn't have the funding or time to wrap each tree in mesh and believed that beavers are nuisance animals that should be exterminated.

I offered to acquire mesh or tree wrapping and recruit volunteers to assist them, as I have done on numerous other properties as a volunteer with local environmental organizations, including watershed councils and soil & water conservation districts. Other neighbors hopped into the conversation and offered their assistance, but the family was adamant that beavers are a nuisance, they present a danger to private homes, and the family wanted to use lethal means to remove the beaver from their property.

After much discussion, the the family agreed to allow volunteers onto their property to wrap their trees in meshing.

Since then, I have had inquiries from other neighbors for education about beavers and financial resources to assist with mitigation so they can wrap other trees in meshing.

Our neighborhood is the perfect example of healthy habitat for beavers who are living within 20 feet on private homes. We have well over 100 homes in our neighborhood,

and homeowners don't want damage to their homes. However, most of them do not know how to coexist with beavers, nor do they have the financial resources to implement non-lethal mitigation techniques.

The timing is ripe now for programming and funding for private landowners to implement non-lethal mitigation techniques. People are scared about potential negative impacts to trees on their properties, and providing education and funding for beaver mitigation and coexistence tools for private landowners is the right thing to do now. Watershed Councils are positioned to deliver technical assistance and on-the-ground support to landowners and simply need funding to do this work.

Please vote yes on House Bill 3143.

Thank you,



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