

Submitter: Hillary Tiefer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

HB 3932 so we can allow beavers to help restore Oregon's thousands of miles of impaired waterways for free. HB 3932 targets rivers and streams categorized as Category 4 or 5 by DEQ's water quality standards – both indicate impaired waterways. This also includes waterways deemed impaired under the Clean Water Act. More than 2/3rd of surveyed waterways in Oregon (106,390 miles) are currently classified as "impaired." The bill proposes closing hunting and trapping of beavers on waterways on public lands deemed impaired by DEQ. Robust scientific evidence shows that beaver dam complexes can address most of these water quality issues. And they do it for FREE! Beavers are ecosystem engineers. Their activities, such as canal-digging and dam-building, help slow water flow, restore impacted water tables and underground aquifers, create natural wetlands that filter toxins, and create wildlife and fish habitats at the same time. Almost half of Oregon's streams and rivers suffer from poor water quality. That's over 100,000 miles of waterways! The Department of Environmental Quality is tasked with restoring these waterways but lacks the resources to do this at the scale needed. This is where beavers can help. Passing HB 3932 would allow beavers to help restore these waterways by closing hunting and trapping of beavers on these impaired waterways on public lands. There is robust scientific evidence that beaver dam complexes can address most of the water quality issues of concern. They enable beavers to access waterways where they need to be and remain long enough to perform their ecosystem functions without getting trapped.