

Submitter: Carl Berg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

My name is Carl Berg and I have been an Oregon resident for 67 years, 50 of those years I have trapped beaver in this state so I would say it is fair to say I know quite a bit about beaver and how they are faring in our waters. In addition, as an amateur historian I have read extensively about beaver all the way back to Astor's Pacific Fur company post on the Columbia river.

Here is what I can tell you about beaver. They have always been numerous along the Willamette river flood plain all the way back to white man's arrival. And they still are! When the Oregon beaver transplant program was active in the 1930's and 40's most of the beaver were relocated from these waters.

Wherever habitat permits beaver will thrive. Best beaver habitat is open flood plain waters with good forage and low streambed gradients. Mature alder and fir in riparian zones with lots of large predators are not good beaver habitat and few will be found there. The Hudson Bay company realized this and spent no efforts in trapping the Oregon coast range in the 1820's and 30's.

Finally I would like committee members to know that just as we thin carrots in our garden to allow the others to grow and thrive, the same is true with beaver. I trap a certain number of beaver off the rivers and streams of the Willamette valley which in turn actually helps to keep a healthy beaver population. Overcrowded beaver fight, often dying from their wounds, and are more susceptible to disease such as tularemia. Beaver likely kill more beaver than trappers do.

Harvest data that is now collected for beaver in Oregon show that almost all of the harvest comes from the Willamette river and its tributaries. Interestingly, this is also where most of the beaver-man conflict is recorded. Especially with hazelnuts orchards increasing in acreage every year beaver-man conflicts are on the rise. In the late 1970's beaver complaints were second only to that of coyotes, which led the game commission to lift limits to beaver trapping and reclassify some beaver on private ground as "predatory".

As it is, regulated trapping helps keep the population healthy and in check reducing trouble and expense for the farmers. Banning beaver trapping will do nothing to add beaver to areas we think they should be in. If the habitat was good they would already be there.

In recent years some beaver transplant efforts have been made to try to establish beaver in areas that are poor habitat. Success rate has been close to zero. I know

of these things because as a trapper I often collaborate on beaver studies and know the players.

Please vote NO on advancing HB 3932. It does nothing to help beaver.