

Submitter: Steph Spencer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3932 so we can allow beavers to help restore thousands of miles of impaired waterways in Oregon.

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 habitat at the same time. The dams also have a greening and cooling effect, which helps combat wildland fires.

Almost half of all 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 shows beaver dam complexes can address most of the water quality issues of concern. This bill is NOT about limiting beaver harvest and increasing beaver population. Instead, this bill would enable beavers to access waterways where they need to be and remain long enough to perform their ecosystem functions without getting trapped out.