

Submitter: Alicia Schubert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3932

Dear Chair Rep. Lively, Rep. Vice-Chair Gamba, Rep. Vice-Chair Levy and members of the committee,

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3932 so we can allow beavers to help restore Oregon's thousands of miles of impaired waterways 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 habitat at the same time.

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.

I volunteer with The Wetlands Conservancy and go out into local wetlands wearing waders to count amphibian egg masses or look for beaver activity. I can see first hand the importance of beaver activity and how it helps create a healthy eco system. Their dams slow down water which filters it. Slow or still water is where many species breed. This increases the health and diversity of the waterway.

I have also heard of a dam built by beavers in the Czech Republic. The government was planning on creating a dam in the same place. It was going to take millions of dollars and years of work. While they were planning, beavers did the job. Beavers are great at what they do. We need to allow them to do their work. It is beneficial and free. More thought should be put into living in harmony with our amazing engineers, not killing them.

Sincerely,
Alicia Schubert