

Submitter: Anthony Rubeo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Janeen Sollman,

As someone who has legally managed waterborne wildlife just outside Hillsboro for nearly 14 years, I need to make something clear. McKay Creek is one of the healthiest beaver, otter, and muskrat systems in our area, and that is not speculation. That is hands on experience.

I have actively managed an offshoot of that creek through trapping, one of the oldest wildlife management practices we have. I have weighed animals, measured them, evaluated den health, removed individuals when necessary, and allowed sustainable repopulation the following season. Through removing invasive nutria, which compete directly with muskrat and can reach 20 pounds, I have watched the average muskrat size increase from around 2 pounds to 4.5 to 5 pounds. That is measurable ecological improvement.

McKay Creek itself holds strong populations of beaver, otter, and muskrat. Beavers, our state animal, create structure and habitat for entire ecosystems. Most of their dens are underwater and invisible unless you are actively walking banks, reading sign, and tracking movement. I spend full days in those swamps. I run trail cameras. I track patterns. I am outside year round.

You have already seen what development does near the Hillsboro Airport corridor. I managed that area too. After data centers were built, wildlife presence dropped dramatically. The animals left. You may not see that from an office, but it is visible on the ground.

Now you are proposing data centers within half a mile of where I manage. These facilities require cold water to cool hot systems. That water leaves warmer than it entered. When that warmed water reenters McKay Creek, you raise creek temperature.

Cold water is not optional for species like coho salmon. They migrate from the ocean through major river systems and push into tributaries like McKay to rest and spawn. Raise the temperature and you stress or kill them. Warm McKay Creek and that water flows into the Tualatin River, then into larger systems. Water does not stop at city limits. It is a ripple effect.

It is not just salmon. It is beaver, otter, muskrat, crayfish, aquatic insects, stoneflies, and countless microscopic organisms. I have pulled 52 crayfish from a single pot in one deep hole in McKay Creek. That is a thriving system. Increased temperatures will push species out or collapse populations.

Beavers need quiet. Otters need structure. Muskrat need stable vegetation. Industrial scale facilities disrupt that balance.

This is not just about deer or raptors people occasionally see. It is about what most never see. Water sustains the entire ecosystem.

You frame this as economic benefit. I would rather pay more in taxes than destroy farmland, Indigenous stewarded land, and a functioning cold water ecosystem for concrete buildings that largely self maintain after construction.

Those of us raising concerns are not speaking emotionally. We are speaking from years of direct observation, management, and measurable data.

This decision does not just alter land. It alters a living, connected system that extends far beyond one creek. Once disrupted at scale, that damage is not easily undone.