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The Humane Society United States and Predator Defense Urge a No Vote on H.B. 4119

H.B. 4119 is a De Facto Repeal of Measure 18:

- H.B. 4119 allows the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission to create pilot programs county by county for the purpose of reinstating hound hunting of cougars. In short, H.B. 4119 essentially allows for a return of the cruel and unsporting practice of using hounds for sport hunting of cougars, a practice decisively rejected twice by Oregon voters.
 - *In 1994 voters passed Measure 18 into law, prohibiting Oregon hunters from hound hunting of bears and cougars and baiting of black bears. Exemptions allow for the use of these techniques by state and federal officials and property owners to remove specific animals causing damage or threats to the public. What's more, ranchers can use dogs or hire agents to hound cougars or bears causing damage to livestock, agriculture, or forest crops. (See ORS 498.164 and ORS 498.012).*
 - *In 1996 voters also overwhelmingly rejected Measure 34, a ballot measure brought forward by hound hunting interests, in an attempt to reinstate these unsporting and inhumane hunting practices.*
- H.B. 4119 overturns the voters' decision by allowing the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission to reinstate cougar hounding seasons, thereby reversing voter imposed protections for Oregon cougars.
- H.B. 4119 creates a patchwork of inconsistent wildlife laws and geographic hunt zones.
- H.B. 4119 does not address public safety or livestock protection, but it may well cause increased risk to public safety and livestock. Research shows that not only is there no correlation between high hounding mortality and conflicts, but that heavy hunting pressure actually creates conflicts. Vancouver Island allows high levels of hound hunting and they have one of the highest rates of conflict.
 - *Scientists found that sport hounding may cause conflicts by targeting dominant males for trophies. Dominant males are fiercely territorial and kill juveniles invading their turf. Juveniles are most often responsible for conflicts.*
 - *Research shows that high levels of mortality result in changes to age structure favoring juveniles.*

History of Legislative Attacks on Oregon's Cougars:

- Since passage of Measure 18, the Oregon Legislature and the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission have made a number of management changes to offset any potential impacts of the prohibition of hound hunting of cougars and bears.
 - *A compromise bill was passed in 2001 which liberalized the killing of bears and cougars for public safety. Thus, any person can kill a cougar, without a permit "that poses a threat to human safety." The definition of "threat" is broad, allowing killing cougars acting aggressively, seen during day light hours and/or attacking pets or other domestic animals.*
 - *Further, The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission dropped the tag fee from \$50 to \$11, doubled the cougar kill quotas in the last five years, increased the cougar season from a few months to year round, and have doubled the tag limit throughout the state, allowing each hunter to kill two cougars per season. In fact, tags sales have increased from 500 per year to over 48,000 in 2010. What's more, the number of cougars killed by hunters has increased from 157 in 1994 to 217 in 2010 and a total of 446 cougars were taken overall in 2010, an all time record high.*
 - *Lastly, in 2006 the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission adopted the Oregon Cougar Management Plan (CMP) which allows the large scale indiscriminate hounding & killing of cougars with no known history of conflict. Under the CMP, agents of the state, and hunters, are allowed to kill and hound any cougar found within a geographic area designated by the CMP.*
 - The CMP is scientifically flawed, relying on unverified complaints as triggers for "treatment" (or killing) areas. The use of *unverified* complaints to determine the CMP's target areas was widely criticized by scientists during limited peer-review of the CMP in 2006.
 - The population model used by the CMP was found to be scientifically flawed, resulting in significant over estimates of the population.

H.B. 4119 Is a Sport Hunting Bill Disguised as a Public Safety Bill:

- H.B. 4119 is entirely unnecessary and benefits a single constituency: *trophy hunters*.
- H.B. 4119 relies on a single tool: *sport hound hunting*.
- H.B. 4119 is not about safety.
- H.B. 4119 may increase risk to the public and livestock by increasing the population of those animals known to cause conflicts.
- ODFW has all the tools needed to address cougar management. Current laws amply provide sufficient protection for livestock and public safety.
- The voters of Oregon indicated twice that they would accept hound hunting by ODFW, landowners or authorized agents to address removing particular cougars or bears causing damage or concern. However there is a significant difference between those conditions and the broad, indiscriminate killing that HB 4119 would permit.