

## Testimony on HB 4119

The Sweet Home School District is dealing with an increasing number of cougar encounters near our schools and school bus stops. It appears that traditional backcountry areas are full and cougars have moved into populated areas such as our community. Here is a recent history of some of the encounters:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>INCIDENT DESCRIPTION</u>
Nov-08	300 yards from Holley Elementary School	The school secretary saw a young cougar along a road near houses 300 yards from the school. The cougar was reported and later shot as a mercy killing.
Feb-10	Across street from Holley Elementary	A cougar scuffled with three dogs.
Mar-10	1 mile from Holley Elementary	A 156 pound cougar was trapped after it had killed two calves and a cow.
Mar-10	Between Holley & Crawfordsville Elementary	A 125 pound cougar was trapped after it had killed six goats.
May-10	1/2 mile from Sweet Home Junior High & 2/3 mile from Oak Heights Elementary & Sweet Home High School	A resident videotaped a mother cougar and two young cougars walking across his backyard.
May-10	600 yards from Crawfordsville Elementary	A school bus driver reported that a large adult cougar crossed the road headed toward the school in front of her bus. Students were immediately evacuated from the playground.
Jun-10	3100 block of Main Street near Hawthorne Elementary	A cougar was sighted on Main Street in Sweet Home by a Sweet Home police officer.
Nov-10	Intersection of 22nd Avenue & Mountain View DR near SHJH parking lot entrance	November 2010 – A cougar was sighted near Sweet Home Junior High School.
Oct-11	150 yards from Holley Elementary	A parent reported a cougar within 150 yards of the building. PE classes were kept inside.
Nov-11	School bus stop	A large cougar crossed the road in front of a school bus about ready to drop off students at a bus stop. The driver notified dispatch who called the parents. The bus driver kept the students inside the bus until parents could drive to the bus and safely pick up the students.
Jan-12	Within 1/2 mile of Oak Heights Elementary	A school district transportation driver hit a cougar.

As you can imagine, the number of cougars near our schools is a concern for parents and staff. For example, one elementary school principal said she is uncomfortable to walk the track by herself at school and it's not because of the fear of being mugged. It's because of cougars.

Oregon's cougar management plan needs the necessary tools to help it be successful. I am hopeful that you will address this concern and support House Bill 4119.

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