

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 6 - 1 - 1

Yeas: Jenson, Johnson, Schaufler, Sprenger, Clem, Esquivel

Nays: Boone

Exc.: Cowan

Prepared By: Beth Herzog, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Authorizes State Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules creating pilot program allowing person to use one or more dogs to hunt cougars. Stipulates rules adopted must ensure all hunts and pursuits are: designed to reduce cougar conflicts; reflective of cougar population data; and, designed to generate data necessary for Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to satisfy reporting requirements. Requires person using dogs to hunt cougars to have valid permits and tags. Establishes annual fee may not exceed \$100 for residents and \$300 for nonresidents. Establishes that money received from fees are to be paid into State Wildlife Fund. Authorizes county governing body to request inclusion in pilot program by: adopting resolution requesting inclusion; documenting need by identifying extent of cougar conflicts; and, demonstrating existing cougar management actions have not been sufficient. Requires Department report back to 80th Legislative Assembly. Sunsets January 2, 2020. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Incidences of interactions between cougars and humans
- History of cougar policy in Oregon
- Impact of hunting mature cougars

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: In 1994, Oregon voters passed Measure 18 prohibiting the use of dogs for cougar hunting except for certain government employees involved in cougar management. The Department updated its Cougar Management Plan in 2006 to guide management actions, through 2011, of the estimated 5,700 cougars in Oregon in accordance with the law. The plan includes actions to reduce conflicts with humans, pets and livestock while also maintaining recreational hunting and viewing opportunities. House Bill 4119 would authorize the Fish and Wildlife Commission to create a pilot program allowing persons to use one or more dogs to hunt cougars.