

Dear Chair Witt and Committee Members,

Predator Defense asks that you vote no on HB2426, HB3395 and HB3437 at Tuesday's hearing. All three bills set the dangerous precedent of allowing circumvention of current law for the exclusive advantage of special interests.

HB2426 and HB3395 permit counties to opt out of Oregon's law prohibiting trophy hunters from using bait and hounds to kill bears and cougars. Allowing counties to selectively choose to participate in state laws sets a dangerous precedent. Both of these bills defer wildlife management decisions from the state bodies charged with that authority, to county officials who have no background, expertise in wildlife. HB2426 essentially establishes a county by county initiative referendum on Measure 18, which was voted for by Oregonians in two elections. HB3395 does the same thing under the guise of a pilot program that counties can elect to be part of. There is no valid reason to support the circumvention of the voters' will and state law. Voters deemed that it was unethical for trophy hunters to use hounds or bait to get an easy shot at cougars and bears, and that the only time such extreme measures can be used is to protect public safety and property. The law's passage has not resulted in reducing cougar mortality -- quite the opposite. For the last decade the number of cougars killed annually in Oregon has been well over twice the pre measure 18 kill numbers, increasing from approximately 204 in 1994 to 506 in 2011. Last year approximately 54,000 tags were sold, as opposed to 560 in 1993 (please see attached ODFW's cougar mortality information attached). Both bills seek only to reinstate two practices the Oregonians twice voted to be unethical and extreme for use by sport hunters.

HB3437 requires anyone serving on the Fish and Wildlife Commission to have a history of holding fishing or hunting license for 10 consecutive years. This is clearly discriminatory and attempts to allow only those with a certain interest and bias on this important decision making body. It excludes representation from the majority of Oregonians who do not fish or hunt. HB3437's requirement is in direct conflict with and contradicts the role of the Commission according to ORS496.090 which states

**that:** All members of the commission shall represent the public interest of the state and make decisions affecting the wildlife resources of the state for the benefit of those resources.

Consistent with the requirements of this subsection, the commission shall provide for the productive and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources for all groups of users. This bill sets a bad precedent for other state commissions as well. Is it fair to restrict membership on the Transportation Commission to only those people who have held a driver's license for 10 years?

Because Oregonians deserve wildlife decisions based on common sense, review of factual data, and which represent the majority of citizens, we ask for your NO VOTE on HB2426, 3437 AND 3395.

Thank you for your attention,

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Oregon Carnivore Representative

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