



**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL 5013/DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
SUPPORT FOR WILDLIFE SERVICES**

TO: Joint Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

DATE: April 11, 2013.

The Association of Oregon Counties is pleased that the Governor's Recommended Budget for 2013-15 maintains the State's commitment to wildlife control by proposing a General Fund/Lottery Fund contribution of \$349,950, from each of the Departments of Fish & Wildlife and Agriculture.

Before the current biennium, as the State's commitment to this service declined, **county budgets have had to backfill funding, notwithstanding the fact that wildlife management falls under the jurisdiction of the State.** The total commitment by counties in the **2011-13 biennium of some \$2.4 million** makes the State's overall effort look very modest. In fact, U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services reports that to have a fully funded county-based field position, the agency must rely on counties to provide 70-75% of the expenses of salary and benefits, vehicle, materials, and supplies.

Counties face severe fiscal challenges about which you are well aware, e.g., termination of funding under the federal Secure Rural Schools Act, gridlock of federal forest management, and the slow economic recovery. Counties are becoming far less able to carry the heaviest load of funding for wildlife management.

Although a larger commitment by the State would be appreciated, AOC understands full well the current budget constraints. As a result, AOC respectfully requests that the Natural Resources Subcommittee **approve funding levels for Wildlife Services in the budget of the Department of Fish & Wildlife (and Agriculture) as recommended by the Governor's Budget.**