

Beth

Rep Witt

From: Steve Mamoyac <salmonberries@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 11:53 AM
To: Rep Witt
Subject: Reject HB 2624 and HB 3395
Attachments: HB 2624 and 3395 testimony.doc

Please enter the attached testimony into the official record. Thank you.

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Dear Representative Witt:

We encourage you to **reject HB 2624 and 3395.**

In 1994, Oregon voters approved Measure 18 which prohibited the sport hunting of bears and cougars with hounds. A subsequent combination of unfounded fear and intense political pressure resulted in the liberalization of cougar hunting regulations which more than doubled the cougar mortality rate in the span of 17 years. The States "Cougar Management Plan", adopted in 2006, has been heavily criticized by independent scientists for its reliance on incomplete/inaccurate data and use of flawed population models. It is founded on the unproven perception that Oregon's cougar populations have increased dramatically and that additional "management", involving the lethal removal of healthy animals by "agents" using traps and/or hounds, is required to keep populations under control.

Since Measure 18's adoption, several attempts to overturn it have been made. All have been unsuccessful. Oregon voters have made it crystal clear that they do not approve of sport hunting for cougars and bears when hounds are involved.

House Bill 2624 represents an all-too-transparent "end run" around Measure 18 by allowing voters to decide the issue for their county of residence. Presumably, proponents of the bill assume that such an arrangement would result in the ban being overturned in the more rural/politically conservative counties. While the desired outcome might very well occur, it would clearly violate the will of Oregon's voting *majority*. The subject resources belong to all Oregonians, irrespective of where they happen to reside, and they have spoken.

House Bill 3395 constitutes another attempt to subvert the will of the voters. The apparent strategy here is to "crack open the door" on Measure 18 through creation of a "pilot program" that allows hunters to use hounds on a limited basis. Again, what do the proponents of this bill not understand? Oregonians have already spoken on this issue: sport hunting with hounds for cougars and bears is unacceptable, period.

Rather than expending limited public resources attempting to subvert the will of Oregonians we submit that a far more constructive approach would be for the Legislature to provide the ODFW with the funding necessary to improve their research, monitoring and evaluation (RM&E) program for cougars. Presently, the agency's RM&E program is severely under funded/staffed and thus incapable of conducting the kind of population specific analyses critical to sound cougar management.

Please do right by Oregon voters and cougars and reject HB 2624 and 3395.

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