

Testimony delivered to Senator Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
May 1 2013, re. HB2252

Good afternoon Chair Dingfelder and Committee Members,

My name is Sally Mackler and I am representing Predator Defense, a national conservation organization based in Eugene.

We are asking you to support the amendment to HB2552 offered by Representative Buckley. Our interest in the bill relates specifically to the amendment which requires periodic review of wildlife management plans and a peer reviewed report to the commission, legislature and the public. This amendment would reinstate the requirement for periodic review of wildlife management plans which was eliminated in 2011.

We believe it is incumbent upon the state to ensure that wildlife management plans fulfill three basic criteria: first, the plan must be based in the most current and sound science; second, the purpose of the plan focus on benefiting the majority of Oregonians who value wildlife, and lastly that the plans be fiscally prudent.

The proposed amendment seeks to require a method of ensuring that wildlife management plans fulfill the very basic criteria suggested above by requiring ODFW to provide periodic review of the Plans and a broad peer reviewed report to decision makers and the public.

Reviews and reports were required of 7 big game wildlife management plans, including Bear and Cougar Plans, until 2011 when the Commission, at the request of the department, removed the requirement. At that time the Bear Plan had not been updated in 13 years. The Cougar Plan has not been updated since its inception in 2006. A peer-reviewed report of the Cougar Plan was required by budget note in 2009, which resulted in serious and significant criticism from Washington State University, the home of the nation's leading research on cougar conflicts. (Please see attached document) An initial limited peer review of the plan in 2005 also resulted in numerous criticisms of the plan's underlying scientific premise and methodologies from the best minds in cougar research, including Ken Logan, Linda Sweanor, Becky Pierce, Paul Beier, Rick Hopkins and more. (These documents are available upon request)

Public safety and livestock protection are certainly major concerns the management plans should address. Currently the Cougar Plan includes no

component related to damage or safety, and instead focuses exclusively on increasing cougar mortality by using agents to kill cougars in target zones. Currently, and for the last 4 years, all target zones have been located remotely in prime deer and elk habitat and dedicated to improving hunting opportunities. The 15 plus years of field research from Washington State biologists reiterate that heavily hunting cougar populations in prime deer habitat creates increased risk of conflicts with the public by changing the age ratios of the population to favor juveniles, the age class associated with conflict. Hence by dismissing current biological research and continuing to devote the management plan to increasing hunting mortality, the state is potentially increasing risk to the public.

We believe that Oregon's citizens and wildlife should have the benefit of wildlife management that is based in sound and current science; and that this amendment provides a logical means for decision makers to ensure that takes place. Please support the amendment to HB2552.

Thank you for your attention,

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