

Oregon Hunters Association

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Testimony in Support of HB 2390

Chair Dingfelder and Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

For the record I am Al Elkins representing the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA). We are a ten thousand-member organization. The mission of OHA is to “provide an abundant huntable wildlife resource in Oregon for present and future generations, enhancement of wildlife habitat and protection of hunter's rights.” Last year alone OHA put over \$178,000 of its own money into wildlife and habitat enhancement projects in Oregon.

I am here today in support of HB 2390. In 2007 OHA supported HB 2971 which gave ODFW the authority to appoint a person to act as an agent for the purpose of using one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bear or cougar. That bill was necessary because the statutes at that time did not allow for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to hire someone to do wildlife activities as an agent but only hire them as a full time employee. In 2007 HB 2971 gave ODFW the authority to do so.

The bill before you today, HB 2390 repeals the sunset of January 2, 2014 that was in the 2007 legislation and allows ODFW to continue to appoint a person to act as an agent for the purpose of using one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bear or cougar. These agents assist with cougar research projects and help with reducing conflicts between cougars and humans or livestock. They are also used help improve deer fawn and elk calf survival.

As you know, an initiative petition was passed in regards of using one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bears or cougars. However in the petition wording now ORS 498.164 (2) the language states “that nothing in subsection (1) prohibits the use of bait or one or more dogs by employees or agents of county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official capacity.”

HB 2390 provides in Section 3(a) of the bill ODFW with the authority to appoint a person to act as an agent for the department for the purpose of using one or more dogs to hunt or pursue a black bear or cougar. It further spells out how the department will accomplish through a written agreement in sections 3(b). In keeping with the intent and spirit of ORS 498.164(2) HB 2390 provides ODFW with the authority to hire agents to carry out the wildlife management activities.

That concludes my testimony, I will be glad to answer any questions.

498.164 Use of dogs or bait to hunt black bears or cougars; prohibitions; exemptions; penalties. (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, a person may not use bait to attract or take black bears or use one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bears or cougars.

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section prohibits the use of bait or one or more dogs by employees or agents of county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official capacities.

(3) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section prohibits the use of bait or dogs by persons for the taking of black bears or cougars in accordance with the provisions of ORS 498.012 relating to taking wildlife that is causing damage.

(4) Any person who violates subsection (1) of this section commits a Class A misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall in addition to appropriate criminal penalties have his or her privilege to apply for any hunting license suspended for a period of five years for a first offense and permanently suspended for any subsequent offense.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "bait" means any material placed for the purpose of attracting or attempting to attract bears. [1995 c.4 §1; 2003 c.248 §2]