

TESTIMONY OF BRIAN POSEWITZ ON HB 2624

Chair Dingfelder and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Brian Posewitz. I live in Southeast Portland. I am here to testify in opposition to HB 2624. My testimony is on behalf of myself only.

By way of background, I grew up hunting and fishing in Montana and came to Oregon in 1979 to attend college across the street at Willamette University. I became a permanent resident of Oregon in 1984 and hunted and fished in Oregon through approximately 2007.

I will let others more qualified elaborate on why resumed sport hunting of cougars with hounds is unnecessary for public safety and wildlife management.¹ I will focus my comments on the damage that HB 2624 does to the trust of voters.

The majority of voters in Oregon have said twice that sport hunting of cougars with dogs is inhumane and unfair. I doubt those voters were saying they considered it inhumane and unfair only if done in Multnomah County or Washington County or Clackamas County or Jackson County, all of which voted against the repeal of Measure 18 in 1996. (See Attachment 1). I'm pretty sure they were saying they considered it inhumane and unfair in all counties. Certainly that is what I was saying when I voted for Measure 18 in 1994 and voted against repealing it in 1996.

I know the supporters of this bill would say that people in Jackson County, for example, should have no say over how people kill animals in Union County, but I think they are wrong. Empathy for other living things quite reasonably extends across county lines; and our system of state laws says that people in one county sometimes can have a say over what happens in other counties by passing laws that apply throughout the state.

HB 2624 would put the state on a slippery slope of allowing individual counties to opt out of statewide ballot measures with which they disagree. Measure 18 is not the only ballot measure to pass overall despite failing in many counties. An equal case could be made, for example, to allow counties to opt out of background checks for certain gun transfers and to opt out of higher taxes on the wealthy. (See Attachment 2.)

HB 2624 also will encourage citizens to make Constitutional amendments out of what really should be statutes. Measure 18 appropriately changed only statute. By continuing to entertain bills that undermine the Measure, the Legislature is sending citizens a message that they need to make their initiatives Constitutional amendments if they want their hard-won victories to stand.

¹ Cougars already can be hunted with dogs if they pose a threat to humans or livestock, and can be hunted with dogs by ODFW or its agents to achieve certain wildlife management objectives. Moreover, if cougars are really too numerous, they should be easy enough to find and kill without dogs.

ATTACHMENT 1

**Official Results
State Measure No. 34
November 5, 1996 General Election**

STATE MEASURE NO. 34		
Wildlife Management Exclusive To Commission; Repeals 1994 Bear/Cougar Initiative		
County	Yes	*No
Baker	5,049	2,476
Benton	12,959	20,789
Clackamas	57,873	79,815
Clatsop	5,459	9,492
Columbia	9,000	9,052
Coos	15,148	11,907
Crook	4,306	2,603
Curry	6,352	4,295
Deschutes	20,611	23,767
Douglas	25,741	16,454
Gilliam	637	385
Grant	2,796	1,050
Harney	2,346	1,112
Hood River	3,438	3,974
Jackson	33,541	38,488
Jefferson	3,359	2,745
Josephine	15,080	16,503
Klamath	15,052	9,280
Lake	2,669	941
Lane	51,664	83,078
Lincoln	7,362	12,634
Linn	21,836	18,227
Malheur	5,723	3,924
Marion	45,112	59,248
Morrow	2,080	1,185
Multnomah	75,933	184,344
Polk	11,027	13,476
Sherman	667	363
Tillamook	5,499	5,551
Umatilla	12,302	8,248
Union	8,029	3,317
Wallowa	3,363	883
Wasco	4,957	4,758
Washington	57,635	93,522
Wheeler	630	231
Yamhill	15,568	14,862
TOTAL	570,803	762,979

*Indicates Passage or Nonpassage of Measure

[Return to Official Results, November 5, 1996 General Election](#)

ATTACHMENT 2

SAMPLE OF OTHER BALLOT MEASURES
SUBJECT TO COUNTY EXEMPTIONS UNDER SAME LOGIC

Month/Year	Measure No.	Substance	Number of Counties Opposed	Names of Counties Opposed
Nov. 2000	5	Expanded background checks in gun transfer.	21	Baker, Columbia, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler
Nov. 2002	25	Increased minimum wage.	18	Baker, Clackamas, Deschutes, Douglas, Grant, Harney, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Linn, Malheur, Marion, Polk, Sherman, Union, Wallowa, Washington, Wheeler, Yamhill
Nov. 2007	49	Limited waiver/compensation requirements in land-use regulation (limiting Measure 37).	14	Baker, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Grant, Harney, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Wallowa
Jan. 2010	66	Raised taxes on high-income earners.	25	Baker, Clackamas, Coos, Crook, Curry, Deschutes, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler, Yamhill