

February 4, 2015

Chair Witt, Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Subject: HB2537 Increases damages for unlawful taking or killing of wildlife.

Thank you for recognizing the major issue, regarding illegal take of wildlife and the importance of "PAYING the FINE - if you COMMIT the CRIME".

While ODFW Sports Group Leaders have taken action to recognize them, it is no secret that prosecutors pursuing wildlife cases in Oregon find little recognition for their efforts and that judges all too often let poachers off with a slap on the wrist to go out and continue decimating our big game resources.

When law abiding, ethical hunters wait 10, 15 years and longer for a tag to hunt "trophy" units, it really burns us when some (expletive deleted) goes out for a joy ride and dumps a trophy animal, then maybe cutting off the antlers, then leaving the balance to rot. Therefore, I would like to suggest you go one step further.

Last year, I served on the Fish & Wildlife Archery Review Public Advisory Committee (ARPAC) with the goal to work collaboratively to review archery bag limits and season structure for deer and elk. One of the concerns of the committee was poaching in areas considered to be trophy big game units. As one example, ARPAC members were willing to compromise some loss of deer hunting opportunity in Walla Walla, Mt. Emily and Weneha B.G.M.U.'s in order to make OSP Wildlife Officers<sup>1</sup> efforts more effective at reducing the loss of trophy bull elk by knowing who had good reason (valid tag) to be hunting in each unit.

Please consider working with ODFW<sup>2</sup> to develop "PREMIUM" hunting units (as discussed during ARPAC meetings) for trophy big game animals, then ratchet up the ante even further on penalties for violations in such areas.

Thank You,  
Rich Thompson  
Traditional Archers of Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> Lt. David Anderson, Sr. Trooper Jim Collom

<sup>2</sup> Tom Thornton, Mark Kirsch