

## Raszka Shelley

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**From:** Susan Heublein <sueheublein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2015 5:48 AM  
**To:** Rep Witt; Rep Krieger; Rep McLain; Rep Barreto; Rep Esquivel; Rep Frederick; Rep Gorsek; Rep Whitsett; Rep McKeown  
**Cc:** Gallagher Chuck; Raszka Shelley  
**Subject:** My opposition to House Bills 2050 and 2181

Chair Witt and members of the committee:

House Bills 2050 and 2181 would allow counties to act in opposition to Measure 18, specifically to resume the practice of hunting cougars with dogs. I personally am opposed to these bills being submitted, reviewed, considered, or approved. I am a citizen of Oregon, living in rural Clackamas County, Molalla, Oregon.

I am here to voice my strong opposition to HB 2050 and HB 2181. Additionally, I request that all pending bills that concern the rollback of Measure 18 be put aside early in the legislative process. I believe that a better approach would be for this committee to direct a working group to discuss cougar management in Oregon based upon objective science..

These two identical bills would allow counties to "opt out" of Measure 18, which, in part, banned the use of trailing hounds to hunt cougars for sport. These proposed bill undercut the voters, encourage counties to circumvent the state election process, and subject Oregon's cougar population to unsporting hunting methods. In doing so, HB 2050 and 2181 fully discount the fact that cougars are an important component of Oregon's natural heritage and remain highly valued by the majority of Oregon voters.

Measure 18 is law and it is the will of the people of our state, including myself. The people of Oregon have twice voted to oppose the use of hounds to hunt cougars because that method is not "fair chase" hunting. Passed in 1994 by a majority, Measure 18 enjoyed even greater public support in 1996 when voters rejected a ballot measure to repeal it. Perhaps just as important, Measure 18 works.

Some of the tenants of Measure 18 that I strongly oppose include:

- Measure 18 already allows the use of hounds to control individual animals that pose a threat to property or public safety.
- ODFW uses dogs to remove cougars as part of its Cougar Management Plan.
- ODFW's own 2014 data indicate there is no need for hound-hunting of cougars.
- Cougar complaints are at their lowest level since Measure 18 was passed
- Nearly 100 times more cougar tags were sold in 2013 than 1993
- If counties are permitted to opt out of Measure 18, they will circumvent two other decisions made by myself and my fellow Oregon's voters, and will render meaningless the state's initiative process, a component of good governance that is highly prized by Oregonians.
- These bills would create a patchwork, county-by-county approach to managing cougars, throwing the state's comprehensive management plan for these animals into utter chaos and taking away the ODFW's ability to manage cougars.

Cougars, as an apex predator species, serve an important role of balancing our natural ecosystems, yet they are vulnerable to persecution. Because these iconic, shy rare mammals are extremely vulnerable to persecution, Oregon's cougars must be protected and managed for all. Without ecologically functional populations, cougars

cannot affect their important top-down role in balancing ecosystems. Cougars also encourage biological diversity.

Hound hunting is cruel, unsporting, and disfavored by Oregonians. Hound hunting involves fitting dogs with high-tech radio or GPS collars that allow hunters to monitor the dogs' movement remotely. After the hounds have treed a cougar, trophy hunters arrive to shoot the stressed, cornered animal from close proximity. During these hunts, nursing female cougars are often targeted for hound hunting. During the chase, kittens can be separated from their mothers. When their mothers are killed, dependent kittens can die from starvation, predation or exposure. Biologists have also documented that kittens have been killed on the ground by packs of dogs. Hunting hounds trespass onto private property and protected lands; they harass and harm non-target species.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify..

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