

Oregon House of Representatives

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Rep. Brad Witt, Chair
Rep. Susan McLain, Vice Chair
Rep. Wayne Krieger, Vice Chair

Public Hearing

8 am, Tuesday, February 17, 2015 Hearing Room D

HB 2050 - Provides that county is exempt from applicability of statute banning use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars if voters approve county measure proposed by initiative petition or referred to people by governing body of county.

HB 2181 - Provides that county is exempt from applicability of statute banning use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars if voters approve county measure proposed by initiative petition or referred to people by governing body of county.

Good morning Chair Witt, Vice Chair McLain and Vice Chair Krieger and Committee members,

I am Stan Steele, Chairman of the Board of the Oregon Outdoor Council. The Oregon Outdoor Council represents the conservation interests of thousands of Oregon's hunters, anglers, trappers, recreational shooters and associated business partners such as Leupold Optics, Benchmade Knife Company and Heavy-Shot.

I thought it would be interesting and appropriate to start today's discussion about cougar management with a brief snippet of Oregon history. It will help us put things into what the majority of us appearing before you this morning believe is the proper perspective.

One hundred sixty-six years ago (ten years before Oregon became the 33rd state), the 27 members of the Oregon Territorial Legislature meeting at the Methodist Church in Oregon City passed an act that attempted to lessen the impact of predators on livestock, public safety and assumedly our declining game populations of which many, if not all, of our pioneer ancestors depended on for sustenance.

Animal Bounty Bill, 1849

Transcript of original document:

A Bill

To be entitled an act to provide for the destruction of certain wild animals therein mentioned

Sec. 1 Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oregon; that there shall be paid out of the county treasury of the proper county on the order of the county commissioners to any person who shall at any regular or special session of the county court of any county in this territory, present to said court, the scalp of any panther, tiger, **cougar**, lynx, wild-cat, large-wolf or prairie wolf and declare under oath, that the animal from which the said scalp was taken was killed in the said county; when the same is presented, the following premiums shall be awarded viz; for each panther, the sum of three dollars; for each tiger, the sum of three dollars; for each cougar, the sum of three dollars; for each lynx, the sum of three dollars; for each wild-cat, the sum of one dollar; for each large-wolf, the sum of three dollars; and for each prairie-wolf, the sum of one dollar and fifty cents.

Sect 2. This act to be in force and take effect from and after its passage. Passed Sept. 10th, 1849 William Porter, Clerk H. R.

This taped interview -- <http://www.outdoorhub.com/news/2015/02/03/mountain-lion-attacks-canadian-pipeline-crew-fought-bare-fists/> -- is of Alberta pipeline worker, Stephen Campbell, who was attacked while working by a mature male cougar on January 30, 2015. The chilling interview demonstrates that cougar management should first and foremost be about public safety. This unprovoked attack is the reality of living with an overly abundant cougar population; it is not a matter of if this will happen in Oregon, but more a question of when. Since the 2013 Legislative session, where this committee passed HB 2624A, which contained the exact language of the two bills before you today, cougar incidents have occurred in the suburbs of Portland, Bend, Lincoln City, Eugene, Springfield and Sisters, to name a few of the communities where the threat to public safety is not just perceived but is very real. Below, I have listed a child-cougar and a cougar-pet interaction that have occurred over the last several years in the Pacific Northwest:

- Tracking the Cougar That Attacked a Toddler
 - https://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=AnR3J_y1wL2CFSmv8RxJp06bvZx4?fr=yfp-t-901-s&toggle=1&fp=1&cop=mss&ei=UTF-8&p=california%20cougar%20-%20child%20attacked
- Dog Saved Boy From Cougar Attack
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xr5GlnB53U

In the minds of many appearing before you today, it would simply be irresponsible governance to not take seriously the public safety threat that overly abundant and human activity habituated cougars pose to public safety.

Both HB 2050, HB 2181 will enable your constituents to democratically decide whether they want to allow licensed hunters to utilize the most effective tool available -- highly trained scent trailing dogs to protect our children, livestock, pets and prey species from an under managed predator: Puma concolor.

The book listed below is a very good literary review of one community's failure to adequately address the human-cougar conflict which ended up in the tragic and preventable death to a young high school athlete.



A decade has passed since [The Beast in the Garden](#) was first published, yet the story it tells – of a community struggling to coexist with cougars, and of lessons learned from a tragic death – is as timely as ever.

Author, David Baron

“A chilling, cautionary tale” – Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

HB 2050 and HB 2181 give Oregon and opportunity to not repeat the tragic cougar management mistakes of others.
Stan Steele, Chairman, Oregon Outdoor Council

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