



April 2, 2015

Joint Ways & Means, Natural Resources Subcommittee  
Co-Chairs, Senator Richard Devlin, Representative Dan Rayfield

Re: SB 5511, Support APHIS Wildlife Services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) program. WS provides valuable assistance to Oregon communities, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for managing wildlife. This includes managing human-wildlife conflicts for agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and on public and private property.

Oregon's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities see significant losses to predators and other wildlife every year and utilize a wide range of tools to limit this damage. These communities often rely on WS wildlife damage control experts to provide technical assistance and help control problem wildlife: coyotes, cougars, elk, Canada geese, and others. It is important that agricultural producers and other stakeholders continue to have a wide range of tools available to protect their livestock and crops from damage, and a robust WS program is critical to this effort.

Thanks to a legislative budget note, WS was able to track 31,111 wildlife conflict resolution tasks between July 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014 and show where resources are being utilized throughout the state. The report shows that WS responded to a wide range of conflicts including goose depredation on crops, coyotes killing calves, cougars killing sheep, and beaver damming an irrigation canal or drainage ditch. WS is critical to addressing these human-wildlife conflicts in both rural and urban areas of the state.

We ask for your support of the Governor's recommended budget for the 2015-2017 biennium, which allocates \$949,884 to WS through both ODFW and ODA. This represents a modest increase (less than 2%) over the 2013-2015 biennium, and we ask the legislature to consider additional state funding to support this important program. WS addresses a great diversity of human-wildlife conflicts throughout the state, and the partnership between ODFW, ODA, and WS benefits Oregon wildlife and agriculture.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Dresler  
Oregon Farm Bureau

Gil Riddell  
Association of Oregon Counties

Paulette Pyle  
Oregonians for Food and Shelter

Paul Lewis  
Oregon Sheep Growers Association

Roger Beyer  
Oregon Seed Council