

AOC STRONGLY SUPPORTS HOUSE BILL 2182

The Association of Oregon Counties, representing all 36 county governments, urges the Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee to pass House Bill 2182 to the Senate floor.

HB 2182 would require the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife to study developing a predator control plan for the state and to report results to the legislature by September 15, 2016.

In spite of the state having exclusive jurisdiction over wildlife, counties have carried the burden of funding predator control for the state. State funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services is appropriated through the budgets of the Oregon Departments of Agriculture and Fish & Wildlife. Counties have always provided more resources than the state for animal damage control, but after severe state budget cuts beginning at the onset of the Great Recession in 2009, counties were forced to fill the shortfall left by the state to the extent that they could. Counties, of course, were not immune to the recession but responded to constituents. Consequently, for the 2009-11 biennium, counties contributed over \$2.4 million to Wildlife Services compared to the state's total of \$340,000, or *more than seven times the state appropriation*. For the 2013-15 biennium, the state rebounded its contribution to \$931,778. The Governor's Recommended Budget includes a modest enhancement in funding to \$949,884.

Concurrently, there has been a series of informal discussion groups by stakeholders attempting to broaden and stabilize the costs of predator control. None has been successful in finding an agreement.

The attractiveness of HB 2182 is that **discussions will be more formal and structured and under the leadership of the agency with jurisdiction over wildlife**. The **bill anticipates that there will be practical solutions**, and AOC will be at the table, near the table, or on the table – whatever it takes to ensure the burden of funding for predator control is more appropriately shared and sustainable.

Please send HB 2182 to the Senate floor do-pass, and give the Senate the opportunity to match the House by passing the bill without a “no” vote.