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Testimony of Humane Oregon on House Bill 4046 (2016)
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

February 2, 2016

Chair Witt, Vice Chairs Krieger and McLain, and members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Posewitz. I submit this written testimony on behalf Humane Oregon. (I regret I am not able to attend the hearing in person.) Humane Oregon is a nonprofit organization formed in 2014 to help advocate for animals in Oregon's political process and elections. I am a board member and the administrator for Humane Oregon.

Humane Oregon supports passage of House Bill 4046. While humane treatment of animals means different things to different people, surely it includes respecting the laws that limit when, where and how, and for what purpose, wildlife may be killed.

House Bill 4046 would help encourage respect for Oregon's wildlife laws by increasing the financial and criminal penalties for violating those laws. The bill also would help reduce illegal killing of animals solely for the commercial value of their body parts by expanding on the prohibitions against taking and using only certain parts of certain animals.

House Bill 4046 is a continuation of efforts last session (HB 2537) to increase poaching penalties. This year's bill is more modest and less complicated in ways that generally make sense and recognize political realities. While not perfect from our perspective, it is a step in the right direction.

Without detracting from any of the above, we have the following modest suggestions for improvement. First, the damage amounts for game birds (\$20), game fish (\$25) and species not specified (\$50) seem to us to be too low to provide any meaningful deterrent. Those amounts should be raised to at least \$100, which appears to be the lowest amount otherwise specified. Second, the damage amounts for fur-bearing animals (including bobcat and fisher) seem to us to be too low to provide a deterrent given the commercial value of fur.

Last year's bill was supported by a broad range of stakeholders – from hunting and angling groups to animal welfare organizations. This year's bill, which is even more modest, should be similarly supported and should be passed.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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