

Date: March 29, 2017

To: Natural Resources Subcommittee, Joint Committee on Ways & Means

From: The Association of Oregon Counties

Subject: House Bill 5010/Department of Fish & Wildlife/USDA Wildlife Services funding

Please add to the records of the Natural Resources Subcommittee these comments related to House Bill 5010 and funding for Wildlife Services, which is on the subcommittee's agenda for public hearing on March 29, 2017.

**AOC respectfully urges reinstatement of critical legislative funding of
USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services**

After a period of cuts to the budgets of the Departments of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) and Agriculture (ODA) for predator damage control was reversed in the 2011-13 biennial budget, the base budget for pass-through payments to the federal US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (WLS) in 2015-17 grew to \$901,002 of general funds (ODFW - \$453,365; ODA - \$447,637). The Governor's Recommended 2017-19 Budget (GRB) provides no general funds for this service.

This action by the Governor is significant to counties, because **quite simply counties are the major stakeholder in statewide funding of predator damage control, and it cannot bear this burden without significant State participation.** Although the number of participating counties, at last count, is reduced to 26, counties still provide more than \$2.5 million/biennium for WLS. With the GRB reducing its share by over \$900,000, the burden to make this program effective falls back on county government and federal funds.

The State's investment has been sound. Dave Williams, WLS Oregon/Washington State Director, reports that the state's current biennial contribution that goes directly to service delivery in the field is \$787,260.72. In addition, WLS contributes a base of \$250,000 annually (\$500,000/biennium) of federal funds for field services. He notes that if the loss of state funds is maintained, the WLS would have to reduce its federal share for the field to compensate for the shortfall in Pooled Job Costs and Overhead, a potential annual total of \$89,598.68.

Meanwhile, the governmental body with jurisdiction over wildlife in Oregon – the State – needs to do its part if the program is to succeed.