



OREGON FOREST & INDUSTRIES COUNCIL
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March 29, 2017

**Joint Ways & Means Committee, Natural Resources Subcommittee
Co-Chairs, Senator Lew Frederick, Representative Brad Witt**

Re: HB 5010, Restore Predator Control Funding (USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of restoring funds to the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) program. WS provides valuable services to Oregon communities, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Oregon's farmers, ranchers, foresters and rural and urban communities see significant damage due to wildlife each year. WS provides a wide range of services to communities, including safety around airports and helping reduce agriculture depredation losses by beavers, cougars, coyotes, elk, Canada geese, and other wildlife. These losses can exceed several thousand annually.¹ WS plays a crucial role managing these human-wildlife conflicts and protecting crops, livestock, and pets from loss.

The challenge to maintain a sufficient level of state funding has been ongoing for years. This is a recurring issue both through the ODA budget and ODFW budget. Once again, we face a situation where the funding for predator control has been cut from both agencies. It is essential to understand that this is a cooperatively funded program, including state funds, federal funds, and participating counties. And for a number of years, diminishing state funds have put a strain on counties.

WS addresses a great diversity of human-wildlife conflicts in the state. The partnership with ODA, ODFW, counties, and WS benefits Oregon wildlife and agriculture. Our coalition respectfully asks that the committee restore \$ 470,140 to WS predator control in the ODFW budget.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

¹ 2011, National Agricultural Statistics Service