



February 6, 2019

**Joint Ways & Means Committee, Natural Resources Subcommittee
Co-Chairs, Senator Kathleen Taylor, Representative Jeff Reardon**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, today we are requesting continuation of ODA’s share of the state funding for USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) program. WS provides valuable services to Oregon communities, both urban and rural. Wildlife causes significant damage each year to natural resources, public infrastructures, private property, and agriculture. WS plays a crucial role in managing these human-wildlife conflicts.

Oregon’s farmers, ranchers, foresters and rural and urban communities see significant damage due to wildlife each year. These communities often rely on WS wildlife damage control experts to provide technical assistance and help to curb damage by beavers, cougars, coyotes, elk, geese, and other wildlife. WS has a historical track record of mitigating wildlife conflicts, demonstrating the value of WS across the state to reduce depredation and provide on-the-ground technical assistance. A robust predator control program is key to maintaining a full range of tools available to protect people, crops, livestock, pets, and infrastructure from loss.

Unfortunately, the Governor’s recommended budget for the 2019-2021 biennium eliminates general funds to WS in the ODA budget. The zeroing of funding puts the entire WS program in jeopardy—a program that is responsible for responding to tens of thousands of wildlife conflicts annually. The proposed budget also threatens recent county efforts to provide county match dollars for the WS program. WS is a tremendous investment for the state, leveraging approximately 5:1 federal and county dollars to state dollars, respectively. This investment can only continue with state support.

WS addresses a great diversity of human-wildlife conflicts in the state, and the partnership with ODA, ODFW, and WS benefit all of Oregon. We respectfully ask that the committee continue and enhance funding to WS predator control in the ODA budget. The funding included in the Agency Request Budget highlights the importance of Oregon’s farmers and ranchers. This program is leveraged several times over in Oregon communities and provides essential expertise to deal with wildlife damage.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

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Oregon Farm Bureau Federation

Al Elkins
Oregon Hunters Association

Roger Beyer
Oregon Seed Council

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Oregonians for Food and Shelter

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