

RE: House Bill 2068, 8 AM hearing on February 12, 2019.

Good Morning,

A critical aspect missing from ODFW's cougar, bear, and wolf management plans are the peer-reviewed, triangulated, and replicable science that restores the ecosystem process for which these apex predators sustain. Rather than be focused on hunting the apex in favor of ungulate operations (hunting and cattle); ODFW and policies need to focus on the ecological process that shapes and maintains Oregon's ecosystems, which are currently in serious decline. Our ecosystems were not designed, nor will they ever be, to sustain hundreds of thousands of deer, elk, and cattle on top of the copious amounts of contaminated baiting and chemicals used in trapping, hunting, and poaching. This paper applauds measures taken to reduce contaminated baiting but requests that hunting cougar, bear, or wolves be **eliminated** from this bill's process. Hunting cougar, bear, and wolves does not benefit the greatest good for the greater part of the masses, as indicated in the following information about the cougar:

California, a larger state with more people, wildlife, and cougar than Oregon has banned hunting cougar since 1990. ODFW wildlife stats show that killing more cougar creates more human and livestock safety threats. In comparison to Oregon, California's ban on killing cougar has reduced incident, public safety issues, and cougar management expenses, such as the cost of public safety kills. Between the years 2009-2013 (4 years), Oregon had 2189 cougar conflict reports, California due to not killing the cougar, only had 739. During these years, Oregon killed 149 cougars for public safety, California killed 20. Because of political pressure by sports hunters and livestock, Oregon is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars killing cougars, when it is not necessary to do so. Recently a cougar was killed in Bend for "public safety," which made no one the safer, if anything, it will cause an increase in cougar conflict issues that include increased exposure to Lyme disease, an annual approximate multi-billion-dollar loss to Oregon's economy. Increased cougar killings due to ODFW policies and political agendas, makes it less safe for all of us including creating a negative economic impact throughout Oregon's economies. On page 51 of ODFW's 2017 Cougar Management Plan, it states we have (approximately) 3300 cougars and not 6000.

Any conflict issues with cougars is a human-caused issue. No matter the safety measures, we cannot stop auto accidents, and unless we make cougar extinct, we cannot stop the rare cougar attack. The environmental and human well-being issues of a landscape without cougar and especially the apex predators are more a threat than learning to co-exist with the apex guild and their ecosystem regulators. It is not the cougar we need to change; it is our perspectives and resulting policies about them that needs to change.

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