

HB 2795 Testimony by Vic Coggins
February 18, 2019

I am writing in support of HB 2795. As the District Biologist in Wallowa County for over 40 years, I saw cougar populations increase from low remnant populations in the 1960's to the present high numbers. In spite of what animal rights proponents say, I saw firsthand how resilient cougar populations can be. They are difficult to hunt without using dogs and have increased significantly in Oregon despite liberal hunting seasons. Oregon has excellent data on cougar populations and extensive long-term research has verified their negative impact on deer and elk populations in some areas.

In many eastern Oregon towns, we have seen a rise in mule deer numbers, partially caused by heavy predation in surrounding areas. The cats follow their prey and this leads to more interaction (and danger) to humans. Elk herds in some northeast Oregon units have been forced to private lands by increased predation as well as heavy hunting pressure on public land. The Zumwalt Prairie elk "problem" is a good example. While cougars are valuable wildlife to most of us, they need to be managed by careful harvest. This can only be accomplished by allowing limited hound hunting for cougars. Please support HB 2795!

Respectfully,

Vic Coggins
Retired Wallowa District Wildlife Biologist