



OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

1821 SE ANKENY ST • PORTLAND, OR 97214
PHONE (503) 238-0442 • FAX (503) 238-6281
OREGON.CHAPTER@SIERRACLUB.ORG
WWW.OREGON.SIERRACLUB.ORG

To: Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources
From: Rhett Lawrence, Sierra Club, Oregon Chapter
Date: February 21, 2019
RE: House Bill 2795

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee: My name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of the more than 25,000 Sierra Club members in Oregon, I am pleased to submit these comments on House Bill 2795.

The Sierra Club opposes HB 2795 because we believe it is unnecessary and is counter to the will of the voters of Oregon; it is also flawed public policy and would set a dangerous precedent for circumventing state law. However, I would first like to point out that the Sierra Club is decidedly not opposed to hunting and is not "anti-hunter." Our organization has many hunters in our ranks and we have supported and been a part of previous revisions to the state's Cougar Management Plan.

One reason this bill is unnecessary is that ODFW's own numbers show that complaints about cougars to the agency are stable or in decline, while the number of cougars killed in the state has increased. And given the important role that large predators such as cougars play in the ecosystem, we believe their management must be closely monitored so as not to deplete their numbers too far. ODFW already has programs in place for cougar management, so we believe the pilot program contemplated by HB 2795 is not necessary.

Finally, as you all know well, the voters of the State of Oregon have twice spoken on the issue of hunting cougars with dogs and both times have rejected the practice as something which should not be available to the general public. We believe that the will of the voters across the state should be honored, especially when we already have programs in place that we believe are adequate to deal with cougars in our state. Furthermore, allowing counties to opt out of state laws they don't like seems like a very bad idea which would open up all kinds of doors for trouble in the future.

In conclusion, the Sierra Club believes that House Bill 2795 is unnecessary and will ultimately be harmful to our state's wildlife. We oppose this bill and urge Committee members to do the same. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony and please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance to the Committee.