

# HB 2795

Testimony by Steve Hagan  
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I am writing in support of HB 2795. While the use of agents of ODFW to harvest cougars in cougar target areas has been an additional tool in the toolbox for the agency, in practice it has been problematic because it depends on the **availability** of those agents at the best times to pursue cougars with dogs in Oregon; in many cases those potential agents are unavailable because they are pursuing other legal furbearers at that time (eastern Oregon bobcat being one example). The result is that the goals of the target areas are unable to be met, in at least one case causing ungulate populations to be negatively impacted. HB 2795 offers the opportunity to overcome this unanticipated problem by expanding the pool of those eligible to pursue cougars with dogs.

The reason that all cougars (including kittens) are counted in the cougar population estimate done by ODFW annually can be found in Objective 1 of the 2017 Oregon Cougar Management Plan. Objective 1 states: **ODFW will manage for stable cougar populations that do not fall below 3,000 cougars statewide.** Objective 1 does not state what age-classes those 3,000 cougars are to be made up of; in fact, the Assumptions and Rationals listed for the object states that **all** age-classes will be counted. In addition, ODFW Actions associated with Objective 1 including managing for minimum zone populations of cougars by zone of **all** age classes. The modeling data presented is consistent with the plan itself.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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