

February 21, 2019

Good Morning Chairman Witt and Members of the committee,

My name is Emily AhYou, I reside in Clackamas county. I have given testimony several times through the years, as a constituent, in support of Oregon's measure 18. Today I am here as the newly appointed State Director for Animal Wellness Action, which is a national organization promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty to animals, including wildlife.

Animal Wellness Action opposes HB 2795, which would effectively allow counties to "opt out" of Measure 18. Firstly, this type of bill sets a dangerous precedent, threatening the very integrity of Oregon's initiative process which allows citizens to truly be a part of the state's lawmaking process. Only 52% of the nation's states are so lucky.

Session after session for the last 25 years, this small faction of trophy hunters comes up with a crafty plan to circumvent this statewide and twice voter approved measure. In spite of all the noise you hear about it being about public safety, HB 2795 is simply another attempt to bring back the cruel blood sport of trophy hunting cougars with dogs. They just can't let this archaic practice die along with the other blood sports like dog fighting where a particular type of person finds this type of violence and suffering entertaining.

I'm unfortunate to have personal knowledge of one such hunter, who is a prolific online proponent of this bill. This person, who lives in my community but has never met me personally, heard that I was a "cougar advocate" and went on social media telling the community not to patronize my husband's business. He has bragged to friends and family about using stray cats to train his dogs and has also been busted for poaching bear. This occurred just last year. Fourteen years ago, when I first testified on this issue, I was threatened by a hound hunter on my way back to my seat, and told to "Get the Hell out of Oregon", a fact I have shared with this committee before.

Coming here through the years to testify on this issue as a constituent has been uncomfortable, but a personal moral obligation I've simply have to fulfill. But to be here today as a representative of Animal Wellness Action is a duty I am honored by.

Most Oregonians find hound hunting repugnant. The humane community is vast here in Oregon and we will not turn our backs on Oregon's wildlife. We humbly ask that you uphold Measure 18 and oppose HB 2795.

On behalf of myself and Animal Wellness Action, I thank You for your time and consideration.