



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-7313
oha@oregonhunters.org • oregonhunters.org

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Testimony in Opposition SB723-2 – Coyote Contests

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

For the record, I am Jim Akenson, Conservation Director for the Oregon Hunters Association. This testimony is in opposition to SB723-2, a bill designed to outlaw contests involving the competitive killing of coyotes in Oregon. On the surface this might seem like a reasonable wildlife rule change, if viewed solely as “entertainment shooting.” However, this bill fails to recognize the loss of an effective management action on landscapes where coyotes can detrimentally impact certain big game and game bird species. Pronghorn antelope and mule deer are especially vulnerable during fawning. Highly valued game birds, such as sage grouse, can be devastated by coyote predation during their nesting time.

Some positive biological reasons for maintaining coyote contests:

- 1) To give antelope and mule deer fawns an increased chance of survival when coyotes are determined to be a primary factor for bringing down newborn survival rates.
- 2) ODFW District Biologists in the past have steered the location of contests to benefit antelope and/or mule deer fawn survival. Removing 2-3 dozen coyotes can significantly influence fawn survival on certain landscapes, especially when timed appropriately.
- 3) When an area is saturated with coyote hunters, there is less of an “educational effect” for coyotes since many are taken (shot) at basically the same time.
- 4) The same arguments applied to ungulate fawn survival can also be applied to other sensitive species such as sage grouse, which are very vulnerable nesters in sagebrush environments
- 5) Coyotes are extremely resilient to being hunted or trapped. By nature, coyotes themselves are prolific breeders with a high pup survival rate.
- 6) These contests provide wildlife managers a broader scale management action to reduce the predation effect and comprise a long-time accepted “tool in the tool box” for wildlife managers.

OHA opposes SB723-2 because it fails to consider the positive aspects of coyote contests as a tool for managing excessive predation by coyotes.