



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

WILDLIFE • HABITAT • HUNTERS' RIGHTS

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Testimony on SB-723-2
Paul Donheffner, Legislative Chairman
Oregon Hunters Association

Our association has over 10,000 members in 26 chapters statewide. We are extremely alarmed over SB-723. The original bill was horrible. The dash 2 removes many unintended consequences, however, it remains completely unacceptable.

Standing in our boots, **this bill is nothing less than 15 groups trying to use the power of the Legislature to intimidate and bully law abiding hunters. It is hurtful harassment of hunters by groups trying to create a new crime for a benign activity that causes no harm to anybody. The Legislature should not be a party to such mobbing!**

Why the fuss? Coyote hunting is perfectly legal in Oregon, governed by our wildlife laws. Coyotes can be hunted all year long, there are no limits on how many a person can take. In rural and rural/urban zones they are frequently viewed as unwelcome because of the predation they cause to pets, domestic livestock and our deer and elk populations. There is no evidence to suggest that hunting coyotes has any negative impact on coyote numbers. In fact, testimony for the bill suggests it may boost coyote numbers (p. 3, item 4, Humane Society Testimony 2/21/19).

OHA has a few chapters in eastern Oregon that sponsor coyote "contests". These **Members Only** contests are **Not Open to the Public**. Our Klamath chapter has a yearlong contest, in which members can bring in a hide at a monthly chapter meeting to exchange for a raffle ticket. At the end of the year, during a holiday potluck gathering, one ticket is chosen for a prize. Should this **private association** activity really be made into a crime?

There is no mass hunting. Members can hunt whenever they want (as allowed by law), and nobody has to participate. For this simple **association activity**, groups trying to harass us want the Legislature to make it a misdemeanor crime. We strongly protest this attempted coercion of our law abiding members over a raffle contest. This is simply wrong.

We can't believe there aren't more pressing issues facing our citizens than making our **private non-profit organization's** contest into a crime.

SB-723-2 is a gross infringement on, and violation of our First Amendment rights to Freedom of Association and Freedom of Speech. There is absolutely no need for this bill. Let's stop the harassment here and now.