

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Harney County Oregon for my whole life, growing up in the farming and ranching community, I ask you to oppose SB 723.

These coyote hunting contests are what keeps my community business' doors open in the winter when tourism is almost nonexistent at that time of year. The hotels and motels get rooms filled, the convenient stores and local restaurants all get that little bit of extra money that they normally wouldn't get, to keep more employees working and to feed their own families. If this bill passes it will hurt more people then you may have thought.

Ranchers and farmers in this 10,607 square mile county lose an estimated 100 head of cattle per year due to coyotes. That is almost \$100,000 of lost revenue for my county just because of coyotes. Hunts like this is free predator control to our farming and ranching community. When ODFW has a lump sum of money for coyote control that all tax payers pay for. The only difference is the Derbies pick up the coyotes and sell them to a fur buyers to be put to a use.

These hunts are all ethical and legal. Every hunter in these contests are professionals and do it for a cause. To save cattle, wildlife (including the threatened Sage Grouse), house pets, as well as humans. There has been encounters all over the U.S. that family pets, kids and even adults have been attacked or killed by coyotes. These hunts are not to eradicate the coyote population. They are to keep them at a manageable and safe level.

Again, as a hunter and farmer I ask you all to please oppose SB 723.

Joe Witzel  
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Note: I wish this letter to be included in the official records