



March 14, 2019

The Honorable Betsy Johnson
Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Jeff Reardon
Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Reardon and members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of the more than 17,000 Oregon members of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), I would like to express our concern about SB 5510, which proposes to eliminate general fund appropriations for USDA Wildlife Services in budgets for both the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

USDA Wildlife Services provides extremely valuable services to the citizens of Oregon—resolving conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, property, natural resources and human health and safety. Some members of the public object to Wildlife Services exercising lethal control of wildlife—including predators—to resolve conflicts. RMEF firmly supports the ability of Wildlife Services, under the direction of ODFW and ODA, to utilize lethal control when warranted to minimize livestock loss and protect agricultural products and natural resources. RMEF also supports utilization of lethal control of certain predators and pests to achieve proper balance of wildlife populations and to protect the public and other wildlife from diseases and vehicle collisions.

USDA Wildlife Services implements science-based integrated approaches to predator management in Oregon, including a variety of valuable non-lethal measures. These include research projects, technical assistance to agencies and citizens on deterrence, and animal capture and relocation.

Oregon Revised Statute 610.020 (Predatory Animal, Rabbit and Rodent Control Fund) requires the Legislature to provide at least \$120,000 per biennium to USDA Wildlife Services to implement its programs to benefit all Oregonians. SB 5510 would violate the legislative intent of this statutory requirement and significantly impact the ability of Wildlife Services, ODFW and ODA to resolve human and wildlife conflicts across the state.

For these reasons, RMEF encourages the Subcommittee to include full funding for USDA Wildlife Services in the ODFW and ODA budgets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Blake L. Henning
Chief Conservation Officer