



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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April 3, 2019

Attn: Chair Witt and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources

RE: HB 3118

I write today in support of HB 3118. As a representative of OHA, a lifetime Oregonian and a resident of western Oregon, I am concerned about the dramatic increase in cougar populations and resulting more frequent and dangerous encounters with cougars in rural and urban areas of the state.

Specifically, I live adjacent to Oregon State University's McDonald-Dunn Research Forest. The 10,00 plus acre forest is located just north of Corvallis and experiences over 150,000 visitors annually recreating on the extensive system of multi-users trails. There have been a record number of cougar sighting on the forest in 2018 and at least numerous confirmed sightings in the neighborhoods surrounding the forest property. There is no predator hunting allowed on the forest properties though hunting opportunity is provided for some game species in the more remote parts of the forest.

Given the more than doubled numbers of cougars since the mid-1990's ban on the use of hounds for cougar hunting and the spike in recreation use on our public lands, including McDonald-Dunn forest, there is a very real potential for a similar increase in tragic encounters with cougars.

HB 3118 allows controlled use of the most effective tool our state wildlife managers have to control specific targeted cougar populations and to effectively react to these large predators where they demonstrate a potential threat to our citizens, pets and livestock. This is true specifically in areas where the limited effectiveness of other hunting tools is not available, specifically high use outdoor recreating areas, the fringe areas of communities, small family private farms and residential areas.

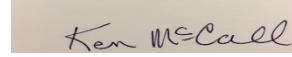
The low annual success of current hunting is barely 4% of the 6,400-cougar population estimate across the state and 0% in no hunting areas such as described in this letter. That leaves our wildlife managers with limited tools to deal with localized cougar encounters. HB 3118 gives our wildlife managers a tool to help solve a growing problem by removing problem cats or pushing them out of areas they do not belong in.

As responsible hunters and citizens we should provide for effective management and vetted agents, not wait for another tragic loss of human life or tolerate continued impacts on domestic animals and reduce predation on our other huntable wildlife.

The effect of this bill will be to reduce human safety threats, lessen domestic animal depredations, and reduce predation rates on game animals, specifically deer and elk. Oregon cannot afford to have another cougar caused human fatality. Let us be aware of the current general ban on hound hunting yet allow our professional and responsible wildlife managers use the tools provided by HB 3118 as needed.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken McCall".

Ken McCall

Resource Director, OHA