



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

State Fish and Wildlife Commission

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Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: SB 723 -2 Support

Dear Chairman Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

As Chair of the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission and a lifelong sportsman dedicated to wildlife conservation, I am writing to urge you to pass SB 723 -2, the bill to ban coyote killing contests in Oregon. Killing large numbers of predators as part of an organized contest or competition is inconsistent with sound, science-based wildlife management and antithetical to the concepts of sportsmanship and fair chase.

As a hunter myself, I am proud of the key role the hunting community plays in conserving our state's wildlife. These killing contests, however, are not responsible hunting. They glorify killing for its own sake and cast Oregon's entire hunting community in a bad light. If we want to preserve hunting for the sake of future generations, we must be mindful of how our activities are perceived by the non-hunters. Bagging large numbers of animals as part of a contest are a stain on responsible sportsmanship and are sure to turn more and more Oregonians against all hunting. These killing contests are nothing but wanton waste. They remove animals from the populations that are not known to be a problem and are simply performing their ecological role.

Further, Oregon has adopted the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that includes as a core principle that "wildlife can only be killed for a legitimate purpose. Wildlife is a shared resource that must not be wasted. The law prohibits killing wildlife for frivolous reasons."

We know that killing large numbers of coyotes is not only socially repugnant to most Oregonians it is counterproductive. It is well known that coyotes are a highly adaptive species that respond to efforts to exterminate them by increasing their rates of reproduction. We know that like all predators, coyotes are important to their ecosystem and help to keep their natural prey species, especially rodents and small mammals, in check. When large numbers of them are removed, those species will become overabundant and cause even more problems for people.

There simply is no way to justify a coyote killing contest. It does not hold up to scientific or ethical scrutiny, and it is revolting to most people that a small segment of the population engages in wasteful slaughter for the sake of winning a prize. I grew up hunting in Oregon and have dedicated my entire career to the idea that ALL wildlife, even the coyote, deserves to be managed respectfully and according to the best available science. While SB 723 -2 is a step in the right direction, Oregon should prohibit "contest killings" of wildlife species.

Michael V. Finley
Chair, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Our mission is to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.