



HUMANE VOTERS | OREGON

Testimony of Humane Voters Oregon on SB 723B
House Committee on Rules

June 17, 2019

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

Humane Voters Oregon (previously known as Humane Oregon) is a nonprofit organization that works in Oregon's political process and elections to promote humane treatment of animals. We have board members from several organizations within the animal welfare community but are not affiliated with any other state or national organization.

Humane Voters Oregon strongly supports SB 723B, which would prohibit organized contests to kill as many coyotes as possible. We oppose the proposed -B12 amendments. We urge you to send this bill to the full House, as is, with a "Do Pass" recommendation. Among other reasons:

- Coyote killing contests are inconsistent with generally accepted views of ethical hunting. By making it a game to kill as many animals as possible, they show a lack of appreciation and respect for wildlife, which are bedrock principles of ethical hunting. Instead, they glorify killing for the sake of killing.
- As explained in written testimony in OLIS from experts such as Prof. Robert Wielgus, contests to kill as many coyotes as possible are not an effective way to manage coyote populations for the benefit of farm animals or wildlife, primarily because they trigger compensatory breeding and do not target specific problem animals.
- SB 723 would not prevent killing coyotes to protect farm animals and wildlife and would not restrict hunting of coyotes. The bill would simply prohibit making a game out of killing as many as possible.
- SB 723 deals only with coyotes because they are the animal generally targeted in killing contests and because their status as a "predatory" species limits Fish and Wildlife Commission authority over how they are targeted and killed.
- Early concerns about impacts of the bill on constitutional rights of free speech and association have been resolved with amendments. We are not aware of any credible legal authority expressing concerns about the current form of the bill.

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We urge you to reject the proposed -B12 amendments, which would provide an exemption for killing contests conducted by nonprofit organizations for their members. This would effectively gut the bill with an easy “end-run” around the prohibition. Moreover, unacceptable coyote killing contests do not suddenly become acceptable just because the contestants are members of a nonprofit organization.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Brian Posewitz

Brian Posewitz
Director/Secretary