

HB 3118 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Natural Resources

Action Date: 04/09/19

Action: Without recommendation as to passage and be referred to Rules.

Vote: 5-2-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Barreto, McKeown, Smith DB, Sprenger, Witt

Nays: 2 - Gorsek, Reardon

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 4/4, 4/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to appoint persons to act as agents of ODFW for purpose of managing cougar population in accordance with Cougar Management Plan administered by ODFW. Requires ODFW to exercise direction and control over management activities of agents. Establishes that agents cannot engage in other hunting activities while carrying out official duties. Requires ODFW adopt rules establishing a process and criteria for selection and training of agents. Authorizes ODFW to assign agents to hunt cougar within area where ODFW determines normal hunting activity will not reduce cougar population consistent with management plan. Establishes that appointed agents: are not required to purchase or possess cougar tag; can use dogs to hunt cougar; can take multiple cougars within area consistent with plan; must report results of cougar hunting; and must dispose of cougar as provided by ODFW. Establishes that appointed agents can engage in non hunting cougar management activities consistent with management plan.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Cougar population management
- Cougar and human interaction
- Existing cougar management plan
- Work group recommendations
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife agent vetting process

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In 1994, Ballot Measure 18 passed, which banned the use of bait to hunt black bear, and the use of dogs to hunt black bear or cougar. Currently, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) can appoint agents to use one or more dogs to hunt cougar in order to carry out management plans, and agent dog use is reported biennially to the Legislative Assembly (ORS 498.164). The use of dogs for hunting cougar is also permitted in the case of a cougar causing damage, posing public health risk, or creating a public nuisance (ORS 498.012).

ODFW currently operates under the 2017 Cougar Management Plan. This plan does not set population targets, but does specify a minimum cougar population target. The primary objective of the Management Plan is to keep Oregon cougar population well above what is required for long term sustainability. The other objective of the Management Plan is to address conflict between humans or livestock and cougar.

House Bill 3118 would authorize ODFW to appoint persons to act as agents of ODFW for the purpose of managing cougar population in accordance with a cougar management plan administered by ODFW.