



House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

February 9, 2021

HB 2728

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattlemen's Association, and Association of Oregon Counties write in opposition to HB 2728. As you are aware, predator management is critical to livestock operations across the state. Predators, such as cougars, coyotes, bears, and most recently, wolves, can have a significant impact on livestock producers, injuring and killing hundreds of sheep, cattle (particularly calves), and other livestock every year. While HB 2728 does not impact a landowner's ability to manage predators on their own land, we believe that it is important for the state and local governments to maintain all the tools available to it to manage predators.

Many predators, such as coyotes, are not particularly valuable food sources for hunters, though their fur can often be utilized in clothing. This means that landowners and communities may require other incentives to achieve the level of predator management needed to protect their operations and ensure that populations of key predators don't reach unsustainable levels. Hunting contests are one method of incentivizing needed predator management. While we understand that contests may seem unnecessary for predator management, they incentivize predator control without resorting to options that can cost the state and local governments additional money, like a bounty on overabundant predators.

Coyotes are one of the top predator threats to calves, sheep and other livestock around the state. Coyotes are a habitat generalist, meaning that they are incredibly adaptive to a variety of habitats, resulting in their statewide abundance. At a very conservative estimate, we understand that there are at least 300,000 coyotes statewide. As such, ODFW does not regulate their take beyond requiring a hunting license.

In order to incentivize predator management in areas where coyotes cause thousands of dollars of predation damage annually, groups will occasionally host coyote contests, largely in far eastern Oregon. It is our members experience that these hunts help reduce the predator population and reduce depredations areas where predator related losses are common.

We believe that the state and local governments should retain all available tools to help manage predator populations, especially for predators like coyotes, who are so abundant on the landscape. As such, we encourage you to oppose HB 2728.

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