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February 10, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Written Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2728 – Coyote Killing Contests Ban

Chair Witt, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennifer Hauge and I am a Salem resident and Legislative Affairs Manager for the Animal Legal Defense Fund – the nation’s preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals, representing a supporter base of thousands of Oregonians. I am writing today to support HB 2728 to ban coyote killing contests in the state.

Killing contests make a cruel and shameful game of inflicting misery and death on wild animals. These contests are often designed to reduce native wildlife populations by making killing “fun” with prizes for various categories of carnage – like who kills the most animals, the biggest animal, the smallest animal, and so on. Whether it takes skill to hunt coyotes or not does not negate the fact that concentrated, indiscriminate killing of coyotes to win prizes and acclaim is an extermination exercise cloaked in the false pretense of predator management and is antithetical to established science and accepted hunting standards.

The indiscriminate killing in these contests means packs are disrupted and displaced. Coyote populations almost always rebound when “teenaged” pups later have extra-large litters to make up for the pack’s losses. Unfortunately, the young, new pack leaders are less experienced than their former alphas. The result is devastating to local ecosystems, as well as livestock populations.

When coyote populations are disrupted by lethal means, younger pups have no adult male or female to help them acquire food. This, in turn, causes many pups to prey on livestock. The disruption can also have an effect on smaller predator populations. For example, when coyotes are absent or even greatly reduced in number in a natural area, the relationships between species below them in the ecosystem are altered, putting small species at risk.

Coyotes are an important part of their environment. They are complex, highly intelligent and considered to be a keystone species, meaning their presence or absence has a significant impact on the surrounding biological community.



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Wildlife belongs to all Oregonians and not just those whom reside in their presence. This is why a statewide law must be passed as opposed to a county by county approach. The stewardship of said wildlife must benefit all residents of the state, reflective of the fact that the majority do not hunt at all especially participating in coyote killing contests.

Oregon seems to be conspicuously absent from the growing list of other states which have passed similar legislation: Washington, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Vermont. After having received significant support to pass the House and Senate on separate occasions over the past two sessions, 2021 is the time for Oregon to join the list of other wildlife conservation leaders and pass HB 2728.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments on behalf of our organization and its supporters.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hauge
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All our clients are innocent

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