

Submitter: Ruth Schellbach

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: HB4080

In practice, money raised by the districts would go to “Wildlife Services” – a highly controversial program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, known for cruel and unnecessary killing of wildlife.

In addition to receiving money from “predator damage control districts,” “Wildlife Services” receives money from general fund appropriations to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Before resurrecting “predator control districts,” Oregon should take a hard look – through a stakeholder workgroup or otherwise – at how this money is spent, whether it results in excessive and unnecessary killing of wildlife, and whether public funding should be discontinued or at least have additional sideboards. HB 4080 includes a provision specifically designed to prevent the public from holding the special districts accountable. (Section 8.)

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, Wildlife Services killed 201,606 animals in Oregon, including 210 bears, 2,147 coyotes and 92 mountain lions, using methods including neck and leg snares, cages and foothold traps, aerial gunning and paid hunters.

Fiscally irresponsible, and unaccountable to the general public, this bill should be dropped. It's time to start protecting wildlife given loss of habitat and climate change.