



DATE: February 8, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources

RE: **SB 199 – Restoring the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission’s Ability to Regulate All Wildlife**

On behalf of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition – which includes Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Humane Society of the United States, Humane Voters Oregon, Oregon Wild, Portland Audubon, and Western Environmental Law Center – we are writing to encourage your support for [SB 199](#) to restore the authority of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (“Commission”) to regulate and manage all wildlife. Today, the Commission may not establish seasons, amounts, or manner of taking for animals classified as “predatory” under state law. This results in a confusing and inconsistent regulatory environment in which the legislature is repeatedly called to intervene on wildlife issues, including those related to coyotes and beavers. The goal of SB 199 is not to prevent or impede the control of predatory animals on private land, but rather to ensure that such control is consistent with any rules adopted by the Commission. We urge you to support SB 199 as a common sense measure to return the regulation of predatory animals to the state entity with the most relevant expertise.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is charged with protecting and enhancing Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. This includes broad authority to regulate the amounts and manner of taking wildlife. However, under current law (ORS 498.162) the Commission is prevented from regulating the take of “predatory” animals, including coyotes and beavers. Current law (ORS Chapter 610) defines “predatory” animals unscientifically and delegates regulatory authority over these animals to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. As noted above, this creates confusion and inconsistency in developing and administering rules and regulations. It removes the management of an entire category of wildlife from the state agency with the most relevant experience and expertise. And it hampers the ability of the Fish and Wildlife Commission to do its job effectively and for the benefit of all Oregonians.

SB 199 would restore the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission’s full authority to establish seasons, amounts and manner of taking the state’s wildlife. It does so by removing the prohibition that precludes the Commission from adopting rules to limit times, places or amounts of taking of predatory animals. It also provides that control of predatory animals must be consistent with any rules adopted by the Commission to manage or regulate take of predatory animals. This bill does not prevent private landowners from controlling predatory animals, nor does it prevent counties from appropriating funds for this purpose. It simply requires that any predator control activities be carried out in accordance and consistent with rules and regulations adopted by the Commission.

Over the last several years, Oregon's predatory animal statute has precluded the Commission from taking action to address our state's trap check times, beaver management on private lands, and coyote-killing contests. As a result, these issues have repeatedly been brought to the legislature for resolution. Oregon is an outlier in this regard. In a comparison of 37 states west of the Mississippi River, only four deny their state wildlife commission the authority to regulate the time, place, and quantity of take for all wildlife: Wyoming, New Mexico, Nebraska, and Oregon.

Please vote YES on SB 199 to restore the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission's ability to regulate all wildlife.

[The Oregon Wildlife Coalition](#) is a coalition of wildlife conservation groups working proactively and collaboratively to advocate for policies that are science based and humane, and reflect the state's conservation values.

Members include:

Cascadia Wildlands

Center for Biological Diversity

Defenders of Wildlife

Humane Society of the United States

Humane Voters Oregon

Oregon Wild

Portland Audubon

Western Environmental Law Center.