

Submitter: Katie Baltzor

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB199

I oppose SB 199 as I see this as an attempt to give ultimate control of predatory animals to ODFW Commission and take regulatory decisions away from the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the rightful agency. While some predatory animals negatively impact wildlife populations, many are economically detrimental to all types of agriculture. For this reason I believe the Oregon Department of Agriculture should be the lead agency on predatory animals.

I believe this bill was written as a way to give power to the ODFW Commission and then pressure them into creating rules and regulations that eliminate coyote derbies, big buck contests, etc. There have been legislative attempts to end coyote derbies three times and each has been met with defeat. I think this is a way to circumvent the legislative process and let a commission of seven individuals, appointed by the Governor, be swayed by groups that have nothing to lose economically, while families within agriculture face the loss of their livelihood. Groups have used emotion to describe coyote derbies, instead of facts. The coyote derbies don't happen year round. They are strategically planned just ahead of calving season on ranches. While not all coyotes are eliminated, decreasing their presence during calving helps ranchers produce a live calf. The manner in which the coyotes are taken is humane as they are killed quickly and hunters ensure they don't cripple one just to have it suffer and die later. The derby provides incentive to ensure each shot coyote is fatal. The prizes given for a derby assist the hunter in the costs they incur to enter the derby and the ammunition and time given to the event. If this bill passes, the elimination of coyote derbies or any type of hunting event with prizes will be the first order of business for the ODFW Commission.

As a cattle rancher and hunter, I support the ODA maintaining authority over predatory animals, especially coyotes. Coyotes will not be wiped out by derbies, as they multiply very quickly and have multiple births. Cattle, elk, and deer herd size are more difficult to maintain as they have many predators and only produce one offspring, if they are lucky, per year. With the profit margins so slim on a cattle ranch, it is imperative to produce as many live, healthy calves as possible and keeping coyote numbers in check is a necessity.

While I would love to testify in person, there are so many issues coming up that affect agriculture that I can't possibly drive 10+ hours to testify for each bill. I sincerely hope you take the time to read the comments from those affected by this bill and listen to what we are saying.

