



TO: Sen. Gorsek, Rep. Hudson
CC: Sen. Lynn Findley & Rep. Mark Owens
FM: Shaun Robertson, President Grant County Farm Bureau
DT: February 13, 2023
RE: SB199

On behalf of the membership and Board of Directors of the Grant County Farm Bureau, I am writing in opposition to SB199, which proposes to convey direct authority to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to implement rules for the hunting of “predators”.

It is well understood that this bill has been presented to remedy the first (of many problems) that corporate predator advocates are facing with their hysterically charged, incredibly bigoted demand to block coyote derbies in Oregon. The testimony you and the Commission have received on this imprudent demand is sufficient evidence of everyone’s focus¹.

However, this bill, like many others in Oregon’s history that were based simply placating the emotions of special interests whose lobbying power was disproportionate to their representation, will have substantial negative unintended consequences.

Historically, the Oregon Game Commission’s authority to restrict hunting was limited to timing of harvest and only for “game” animals (mammals and birds), which served Oregon’s wildlife species incredibly well from the time of early conservation (early 1900’s) up to the period of increasing exploitation (and population) following WWII. The primary statute for which this bill purports to effect is ORS 496.162, which has its origins in a wildlife law that was passed by the legislature in 1949 and that conveyed the authority to the Game Commission to prescribe the “time, place, method or means” by which game animals and furbearers could be taken. That particular substantial statutory change, however, remained true to the primary tenet of Oregon wildlife law that was established in the first period of conservation—that restriction of hunting (or other “take”) was to serve only the single purpose of “conservation”, and that conserving

¹ “Predator hunting” generally, although there is plenty of evidence on the record from the instigators and supporters of this prejudicial initiative as to their hatred towards hunting and rural residents, even to the extent that some have suggested we be rounded up, or exterminated. As I have written previously, some of the language they use in justifying their current ideological attack on rural lifestyles is eerily reminiscent of what their predecessors used to rationalize their agenda against what they found repugnant at the time—whether it was the extermination of Indigenous peoples or the experimentation on disadvantaged individuals and populations.

wildlife was either to keep a species from becoming imperiled or to provide sufficient productivity for recreation (including consumptive uses).

This bill serves to forsake nearly 100 years of successful wildlife conservation by introducing a third “conservation” standard related merely to satisfying the present morality definition and emotions of special interests.

There is no biological or policy rationale for this bill other than to satisfy a corporate political and fundraising agenda and the feelings of a small number of Oregon residents, most of whom are very much disconnected from the extremely wide variety of “things” this bill will actually affect (and for which the legislature is not considering because its only receiving testimony on the bill’s possible effect on predator hunting and control).

Unfortunately, passing arbitrary and capricious legislation on the basis of feelings and without the deliberate, contemplative, and honest debate that our democratic process was not only founded upon but demands, seems to be the order of the day in Oregon. We fully expect this bill to be passed, if for no other reason than to allow additional virtue signaling and fundraising in order to support the next attack on minority-uses/traditions/customs/culture/history/etc. that urbanites and exploitative corporations find repugnant to their own elitist (and business) sensibilities.

In anticipation of its passage, we are turning our focus to the reasonably expected, unintended consequences of this bill because, of course, there is no action without an equal and opposite reaction, particularly when the action is wholly unnecessary, thoroughly negative and not given the examination it deserves.