

Submitter: Tim Kirkpatrick
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB769

February 6, 2025

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

****Subject: Opposing SB769 and SB412 – Protect Oregon’s Cougars****

Dear Members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee,

I’m writing to you as a lifelong Oregonian, a landowner with forested property near the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness, and someone who believes we have a responsibility to respect and protect our state’s wildlife. I strongly oppose both SB769 and SB412, which would undermine the will of the voters and roll back hard-fought protections for Oregon’s cougars.

Oregonians have spoken—twice, in fact—against the cruel and unsporting practice of using packs of hounds to chase and kill cougars. Measure 18 was passed with the clear intention of stopping this practice, and these bills would essentially dismantle that decision, either by allowing counties to "opt out" or by handing out “special” cougar tags to reinstate hound hunting under a different name.

I understand the concerns about wildlife conflicts, but I can tell you from personal experience—owning land that borders Mt. Hood National Forest and the Salmon River—that cougars are not the threat some make them out to be. They are shy, elusive animals that rarely pose a danger to people or livestock. I’ve had them pass through my property now and then, and not once have I felt unsafe or seen them as a problem. In fact, cougars play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance by keeping deer and other prey populations in check.

These bills aren’t about safety or conservation—they’re about trophy hunting and bending to the will of a few special interests at the expense of ethical wildlife management. Allowing counties to opt out of statewide protections would create a patchwork of conflicting rules, confusing law enforcement and damaging Oregon’s reputation for responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

The bottom line is simple: hounding cougars is inhumane, unsporting, and was rightly banned by the voters of this state. Please stand by that decision and stop SB769 and

SB412 in their tracks. Let's keep Oregon a place where wildlife is managed with respect and integrity, not by political maneuvering.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Kirkpatrick

Portland, OR 97210