

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

I am writing to share my strong support for SB 769 because it offers a pragmatic solution to a complex problem. Oregon's cougar population has rebounded significantly since the ban on hound hunting, and while I celebrate their recovery, I also see that our ungulate populations—especially mule deer—have suffered in many regions. Furthermore, some rural communities face rising safety concerns as cougars become more common near homes and farmland. Despite issuing tens of thousands of tags, our harvest rates remain low, indicating that alternative methods might be needed. SB 769 recognizes that local voters should have the final say in whether hound hunting is permissible in their county. This is a respectful, balanced solution that gives people most affected by cougars a voice while maintaining cougar protections in areas where residents don't see it as necessary. For me, it's about building a policy that respects local conditions, science-based wildlife management, and ethical considerations all at once.

Thank you for your time and thoughtfulness,
Michael Hays