

## **I am writing to express my support for SB769.**

Predator control is a very emotional issue for people on both sides of the fence. The truth of the matter is that science, not emotion, should dictate state wildlife policy. The state employs many dedicated wildlife professionals who are extremely knowledgeable and skilled at their jobs. Ongoing population studies and monitoring are designed to provide a clear picture of ecosystem health, and appropriate management actions. Harvest numbers and hunter limits are arrived at using this data. Make no mistake, the state will manage cougar numbers to avoid prey animal population crashes and human conflict. If hunters are unable to harvest enough cougars to meet the ODFW population criteria, the state will use tax dollars to employ professional hunters to do so.

Using hounds is a much more effective method of hunting cougars than stalking. Allowing this hunting method in areas with high cougar density would reduce the financial burden of predator control that is currently shouldered by the Oregon taxpayer as hound hunters will pay for the privilege.

The bill in question is not a free for all, it is allowing another tool for the state wildlife agencies to use in their mission of ensuring healthy and stable wildlife populations in Oregon.

I strongly support this bill and I hope that science based wildlife management wins out over emotion.