

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

I encourage our state legislatures to support SB 769. You may not realize it but the Mule Deer population in the state of Oregon has been on a rapid decline for over 20 years. There are many factors that affect that but one factor is the bloated cougar population which is more than 2x the state's population management objective. SB 769 will allow those counties that wish to reduce their cougar population to have an affective way of doing so. How will reducing cougars help the mule deer population? Cougars are not vegetarians. They only eat meat and their meat of choice is deer. A cougar has to kill at least 1 deer a week to stay healthy. With over 6500 cougars in the state of Oregon today, that equates to 338,000 deer killed by cougars every year. Why is this bill needed to affectively control cougar populations? Simple: Cougars are very elusive animals and they are mostly active at night. During the day, they hide and sleep. Which means there is no affective way to hunt them without the use of hounds. Currently, the only way ODFW can reduce the population is by hiring hound hunters at great cost to the department to do so. It is much more cost affective to charge hound hunters for the privilege to be able to hunt them and collect the money while still accomplishing the same goal. There are quotes for cougar hunting so when the appropriate number of cougars have been taken in a certain area, the department of fish and wildlife can stop the hunting.