

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

I would like to voice my support of SB769. Cougar populations in Oregon have been steadily growing in recent decades. Our cougar population is now the highest in the country compared to other states, now over 6,000. Cougar harvest has been little to none each year in most management units of the state, especially here in Eastern Oregon. Mule deer have been steadily declining since hound hunting was banned. I realize this is a complex issue that involves many other factors such as habitat loss, climate conditions, and predators. Each cougar kills 50-70 deer a year. With this many cougars on the landscape it can have a significant impact on the overall deer mortality and shift a population from sustainable to declining. If we allow the department of fish and wildlife the tools necessary to manage these animals it will have benefits to deer in areas where predation suppresses population growth. Allowing residents of a county to permit harvest of cougars using hounds will greatly improve harvest numbers for management units in those areas. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife uses science based management and regulated hunting to control animal populations. In order to effectively manage cougar numbers hunting with hounds must be allowed, all other methods are extremely inefficient. Some might think that hunting cougars with hounds is too easy, or not sporting. This is simply not true. Even with the use of hounds locating and treeing a cougar can be very difficult and challenging. It also allows hunters to be very selective of which animals they harvest. Please consider supporting this bill and allowing ODFW to effectively manage cougars in counties that support these actions. Thank you for your consideration.