

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 769, which would allow for the hunting of cougars with hounds in Oregon under regulated conditions. This bill is a necessary step in managing the state's growing cougar population, ensuring public safety, and protecting livestock and wildlife.

Oregon's cougar population has increased significantly in recent years, leading to more frequent conflicts with livestock, pets, and even humans. While current management strategies exist, they are not sufficient to control cougar numbers effectively. The use of hounds is a proven, ethical, and selective method for managing cougar populations, as it allows hunters to identify the age, sex, and health of an animal before making a decision to harvest, reducing the risk of taking non-target or younger animals.

Additionally, many rural communities and ranchers are experiencing financial losses due to cougar depredation. SB 769 provides a responsible solution that helps balance wildlife conservation with the needs of Oregon's residents. Other states successfully use hound hunting as a regulated management tool, and it is time for Oregon to reconsider this approach to ensure a balanced and healthy ecosystem.

I urge you to support SB 769 and give wildlife managers the tools they need to effectively and responsibly manage Oregon's cougar population. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Morris