

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

My name is Stephen Price, and I am writing in support SB 769. Over the past 20 years of my adult life, I have spent over 100 days or more in the woods. I spend most of the spring scouting and looking for shed antlers. When I was younger I'd find one or two lion kills each season. Now I find 15-20 a season. Lion kills are very distinct as they are buried or have the nose eaten off. I see more and more lion tracks each year and hear them rather often while hiking. The population has grown each year as our deer and elk number have declined dramatically.

Archery season of 2023 my son Colby, 15 at the time was sitting in his tree stand until shooting light was over. I always pick him up right after dark. That day he asked me if he could take a gun incase something happened and that he had a bad feeling after my fiance and him felt something was stalking them the evening before. I usually tease him and tell him to man up. This day I decided to let him and I am glad I did. On the way out of the tree stand about halfway back to the truck he heard something in the brush, he shined his flashlight where he heard the noise then back on the skid road he was walking. As soon as his flashlight hit the skid road there was a big lion stalking him at about 15 yards. He dropped his bow and popped a round off after the lion had gained about 5 more yards. I heard the shot from the truck and called him immediately. When he answered, he frantically said Dad please get down here there is lion trying to get me. As a Dad that is the last thing you want hear when you're a 1/2 of a mile from your son. I jumped out of my truck and sprinted all the way to him. When I reached him his bow was on the ground and he was visibly shaking. Colby hasn't hiked into a stand by himself since. The next morning I sat with him in the tree stand. About 20 minutes after shooting light Colby tapped me on the shoulder and said there he is. About 160 pound tom walked by at about 50 yards. I had my rifle in case we saw him but he wasn't around long enough to get a shot. Lions are so hard to hunt effectively with the legal methods we have now. I have tried predator calling, tracking them in the snow etc... I tried multiple times to call this lion in to no avail. We hunt on public land about a mile outside of a small rural community here in Southern Oregon. That lion was spotted in town and posted about on social media near the school and rather often after that. In that community lions are spotted in town pretty often. In closing I feel lions are extremely over populated and unmanageable without the use of dogs. I have seen the evidence myself. My son was almost killed by one. No telling what would have happened had I not let him take his rifle for protection. Please consider the use of hounds before someone loses their life.

Sincerely, Stephen Price