

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

As a voting constituent, I fervently request the legislation oppose SB 769. Myself and a majority of my fellow Oregonians (65% per a 2019 poll by Remington Research Group) are opposed to the archaic, cruel, abusive, and unsporting practices of the baiting and hounding of our state's cougars. We have proven this twice with our votes over 30 years since Measure 18 was passed in 1994.

Supporting the indiscriminate killing of Oregon's cougar population is not sound wildlife management. It also is not the will of Oregonians nor in the best interest of our state's cougar population. Current law already provides for special circumstances by allowing the use of hounds in dealing with individual cougars who threaten humans, pets, and livestock, or to carry out state wildlife management objectives by state and federal wildlife agents. This exemption has successfully allowed the removal of cougars involved in such situations while retaining the protections voters have repeatedly confirmed they demand from abusive hunting methods.

Per the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's top carnivore biologists contend that "ODFW grossly overstates Oregon's cougars by including kittens – most of which don't survive to adulthood – in their estimates. By so doing, and by using other flawed population-estimation techniques, ODFW creates the erroneous impression that Oregon has by far the highest cougar population in the nation." These over represented numbers do not justify over reaching by allowing the baiting and hounding of cougars.

Killing our native carnivore population of cougars will likely disrupt their communities resulting in more, not fewer, issues with public safety and property protection. Further, HSUS notes that "studies have shown that trophy hunting of cougars exacerbates conflicts with humans, pets, and livestock because when adult cats are removed – particularly resident adult males – younger, less experienced cats move into those vacancies, and they are the individuals most likely to engage in livestock predation." Not opposing SB 769 would tarnish and weaken the longstanding success of Measure 18 for a few select individuals while dismissing the voting views of most Oregonians.

Please join me in opposing SB 769 and respect the voice of your voters.

Thank you,
Heather Hanson