



Dear Members of the Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee:

The Oregon State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation is writing in support of Senate Bill 769: Relating to county elections concerning methods of taking wildlife. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is an organization whose mission is dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey, and the preservation of our hunting heritage. The NWTF believes the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which includes the principle that scientific management is the proper instrument for wildlife conservation and includes the use of public input for responsible wildlife management. This bill would allow county residents to be active participants in the wildlife management for cougars, while working directly with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for science-based management.

SB 769 is a great solution to aid in responsible cougar management. As human and cougar populations continue to increase, there are more frequent conflicts. Since cougars are illusive by nature, they can be extremely hard to hunt under current regulations. Allowing the use of dogs to hunt cougars is a very effective way to locate them, and have a more ethical take on an animal.

This bill would allow county residents to decide on if hunting with dogs would be allowed within their own county. This would give geographic representation across the state, giving power to the voters on what wildlife management practices they want to see within their counties. If a county passes an initial petition to allow dog hunting for cougars, the county must notify ODFW and work with the agency for regulations. This means that any cougar harvest that occurs, would fall within the science-based framework for wildlife management overseen by ODFW.

This history of cougar management in Oregon is complex and is seen as a successful conservation story. In the late 1960's, there was only an estimated 200 individuals in the state of Oregon. However due to responsible management, and regulated hunting practices, the population has grown to over 6,000 individual cougars. As these populations have grown, so has their interactions with humans. SB 769 would further allow proactive management of cougar populations that would maintain healthy abundance across the state.

The NWTF graciously urges you to support this crucial bill that will benefit wildlife management in the state of Oregon. SB 769 would allow counties to decide on how they would like to see cougar management locally, while coordinating with ODFW



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to ensure science-based management practices are met. The use of dog hunting is a long tradition that has been utilized for successful hunting practices across the U.S. and is an effective way for predator control. SB 769 ensures our wildlife management decisions continue to be science-based, and democratic, so that we continue to conserve wildlife for today's and future generations.

With deep respect for your consideration of this bill,

Chris Henry  
Oregon State Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation