

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. My name is Ethan Myers, I was born and raised in Baker City Oregon and I support senate bill 769. My family and I are all avid sports men and women and have recreated throughout Oregon's diverse landscape for generations. Although I am not personally a houndsman, nor are any of my immediate family members, I believe hound hunting lions within Oregon state's biological quotas is the most effective, and ethical means of take if managed correctly. A houndsman may have the advantage over a mountain lion hunter on foot, or a hunter still hunting a particular area. With that said a hound hunter may be able to tree multiple cats in a season, selecting the best shot on the best subject to be taken. A big issue with hunting any predator in almost any situation is selecting the best animal for the population's benefit, and in some cases being able to select the problem animal given the circumstances. A smaller or less ideal mountain lion is much easier to distinguish while in a tree at close range, compared to the same cat on a barren hillside some hundreds of yards away.

Another reason for my support of bill 769 is the inevitable expansion of urban development in most all cities across Oregon. A great example of this was the cougar that was killed by Oregon State officials just last week (February 6th, 2025) in my hometown's cemetery just on the outskirts of town. I personally have family and family friends living within a thousand yards of the cemetery and to think of someone being injured or worse because of our current management practices is overwhelmingly unnerving.

I have sat through the senate hearing and taken deep consideration to both sides of this issue. After listening to folks from all over the great state of Oregon speak their beliefs on the issue, one thing that stands out above all to me is the overwhelming majority of the lesser population dense Eastern Oregonians support of the bill. While it seems many of those standing in opposition to the bill live in higher population dense areas with less urban wildlife conflicts. The cattle ranchers I know well, the hunters, the recreationalists, and even the folk who generally do not engage with the wildlife on a regular basis in eastern Oregon understand the issues that come from poor predator management. These small community members are faced with the highest population density of mountain lions in the state, being the blue mountain and cascade mountains, yet they are just a minority in the microscope compared to the vast populations of the west side of the state. I stand behind bill 769 because allowing these small communities to have a say in what happens out their back doors should be their choice, and not the choice of a lesser exposed group of people hundreds of miles from the problem.

I personally recreated, and still have in Oregon state every year for over two decades and have witnessed the overall effect on the state's mule deer and elk populations. The burnt river area outside of Durkee Oregon has been an annual destination as far back as I can remember and over recent years the deer populations have plummeted. Worse off is my annual deer hunting area outside of Sumpter Oregon. An area we used to drag the camper to for a family hunting trip has gone from robust populations as well as stellar quality of deer, to depressing numbers as well as quality of deer. The dozens of deer you used to be able to observe from the

duelly mountain highway have turned into the dozen deer we see over a weeks time. Every single hunt unit in the state of Oregon is under the mule deer target numbers, and I truly believe that if the state of Oregon doesn't take a precautionary step in the right direction rather than a reactionary approach to the mule deer population growth, I may have to live in a world where the population may be hurt beyond return and my children cannot be offered the same recreational opportunities that I have been blessed with.

To have balance in the ecosystems within Oregon's wilderness takes management. State biologists will not allocate more mountain lion harvests due to houndsman being allowed to manage the population, and the population will be managed based on animals in a given area just as before in a manner that allows for better field judgment and more ethical distances. Again, if the majority of the mountain lion issues lie within specific counties in the state, I believe it should be up to that individual county as to how the population is managed.