



## MEMORANDUM

TO: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
FROM: Quinn Read, Wildlife Coordinator, Oregon Wild  
DATE: February 5, 2015  
RE: HB 2537 - Increasing damages for unlawful taking or killing of wildlife

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On behalf of Oregon Wild's 15,000 members and supporters, we would like to thank you for scheduling this important hearing on HB 2537 to increase damages for the unlawful taking or killing of wildlife. Oregon Wild's mission is to protect and restore Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and water as an enduring legacy for all Oregonians. We enthusiastically support this measure and submit the following comments for consideration and incorporation into the record.

By increasing monetary and criminal penalties associated with poaching, HB 2537 takes a critical step toward addressing poaching of native Oregon wildlife and deterring activities that fuel the multi-billion dollar illegal wildlife trade.

Poaching is of significant concern to our organization. Oregon Wild is working as part of a coalition to help the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife -- the agency charged with protecting and conserving our state's native fish and wildlife -- address its current budget shortfall and seek creative solutions for long-term financial sustainability. Poaching shows a flagrant disregard for the agency and the wildlife laws it seeks to implement and enforce. It also takes already limited resources away from the people who play by the rules and act lawfully with respect to wildlife-based recreation.

Of particular concern to Oregon Wild is poaching of our state's native threatened and endangered species. Montana has recently taken action to allow the sale of wolf pelts internationally. As Oregon reevaluates the status of wolves and other threatened and endangered species in the state, it is important that we have tools in place to deter poaching related to the international and domestic trade in protected animal parts.

We also would like to address our concern regarding poaching of collared research animals. ODFW and the US Fish and Wildlife Service dedicate enormous resources to collaring, tracking, and collecting data from various species of fish and wildlife. Poaching of a collared animal represents an unlawful take, not just of the animal itself, but of valuable scientific information, and the public resources and dollars that went into collecting that information. Accordingly, we believe an additional penalty is appropriate to specifically deter poaching of collared research animals.

Oregon Wild supports HB 2537 and any efforts to strengthen anti-poaching laws in Oregon. The measure demonstrates Oregon's continuing leadership in fighting poaching connected to the overseas black market trade in live animals and animal parts by specifically identifying the black bear and cougar parts in highest demand. The measure also affirms Oregon's commitment to supporting comprehensive wildlife management and enforcement of our wildlife laws.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these issues.