



FROM: The Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

TO: Senate Committee on Natural Resources

SUBJECT: Opposition to SB 301, 303 & 398

Committee members,

The Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers wishes to express our vehement opposition to SB 301, SB 303 and SB 398. Wildlife populations, including elk, are managed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in trust for the public good in accordance with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The proposals put forward in this bill violate the egalitarian principles established within the North American Model and practiced with unsurpassed success.

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is the Sportsman's voice for our Public Lands, Waters, and Wildlife. BHA was founded around a campfire in North East Oregon in 2004 and have since become the fastest growing conservation organization in the country with national ranks numbering over 30,000 and over 1700 active members here in Oregon.

Our mission is to expand awareness and appreciation for the North American Wildlife model and to cultivate and to strengthen Public Land conservation and wildlife management in order to improve our wild and public spaces and the public's access to them. A central tenet of our mission is to support science-driven management policies.

Such that wildlife populations are managed for the public trust ODFW already has a vast array of tools at their disposal for addressing wildlife-related conflicts. The options include:

- Landowner preference tags
- Damage control tags
- Emergency hunts
- Kill permits
- Herd redistribution
- Subsidized Crop yield improvement
- Subsidized fencing to prevent unwanted grazing

The range of options already available to ODFW are broad and robust and provide ample opportunity for landowners to find collaborative solutions that are effective across a broad range of circumstances which only minimal interfere with ODFW's mandates. Further expansion would come at great cost to ODFW's management goals and, by proxy, to hunters, and outdoorsmen and women.

This bill also contains changes to definitions that unduly complicate management paradigms. Specifically, the change in terminology from "landowner" to "person" changes the intent of the damage management and

increases the risk of unintended impacts to elk populations. It also creates a situation in which elk would essentially be privatized for use by damage tags. The resulting reduction in opportunities for the hunting public would reverberate through the complex ecosystem of interest groups including hunters, government agencies and their funding mechanisms, and to all corners of the recreation economy.

Development of strategies to manage damage caused by elk is and should continue to be undertaken collaboratively by ODFW's wildlife professionals and those directly affected by wildlife damage and with a full understanding of appropriate management tools and the associated costs. Wildlife is and should remain a public resource. All management strategies must incorporate the interests of Oregon's varied stakeholders. Further, the implementation must consider multiple variables, and be flexible across a range of different environments so as to guarantee a best-fit solution. We believe the current options available in ODFW's current damage management policy are more than adequate to address the issue.

On behalf of the ORBHA Board, our membership and Oregon's proud public land sportsmen and women, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to engage further discussion.

Respectfully,

Oregon Chapter Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Board of Directors

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