



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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Testimony in Support of HB 3087

Chair Witt and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources:

For the record, I am Al Elkins representing the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA). I am here today to support HB 3087 the bill that directs the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to establish an anti-poaching awareness program.

OHA strongly believes that poaching is one the most serious issues facing Oregon's fish and wildlife today. In a report delivered in 2018 by ODFW to the Subcommittee on Natural Resources these statements were made by ODFW officials about poaching in Oregon:

- A six-year project involving radio-collared mule deer in south central Oregon found that illegal harvest was a major factor affecting big game. Illegal harvest accounted for 20 percent of known deer mortalities, the same as legal harvest.
- Nearly 80 percent of the poached animals were does, which significantly undermined ongoing efforts by ODFW and its partners to restore mule deer populations by improving habitat, increasing enforcement, and addressing travel management, regulations, and other problems.
- Number of detections of illegally harvested fish and wildlife by OSP:
2014 – 6,025
2015 – 6,949
2016 – 5,987
2017 – 7,644

The ODFW report outlined various ways to combat the poaching of fish and wildlife through the establish of an awareness program based on these strategies:

- Increase public awareness of the impact of poaching and the importance of reporting poaching incidents.
- Develop consistent anti-poaching branding and message across agencies and organizations
- Make it easier to report poaching incidents
- Increase on the ground detection
- Increase deterrence of poaching

In their Agency Recommended Budget for the 2019/2021 biennium ODFW included a Policy Option Package to fund the anti-poaching awareness program. However, the POP was not included the Governor's recommended budget.

The Oregon Hunters Association is asking that you support HB 3087 to begin the fight to deter poaching in Oregon. This bill will help develop a program to improve Oregon's ability to make the public aware of the crime of poaching fish and wildlife which will help aid the Game Enforcement Division of Oregon State Police.

We believe the tragic numbers listed above along with study results show that this is a huge problem in Oregon and steps need to be taken now to deter it. Future Oregonians are counting on us to maintain their recreational choices of hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing in our great outdoors.

That completes my testimony, I would be glad to answer any questions.