

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Ginny Burdick, Chair
Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 723-Support

Dear Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee:

As former President of the California Fish and Game Commission, I presided over our 2014 decision to ban wildlife killing contests statewide, becoming the first state to take such action. It is in that capacity that I ask you today for your support of SB 723 to similarly end coyote killing contests in Oregon.

Over the years, I spent more than a decade in government service, as a special agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and as a park ranger with the National Park Service in Yosemite, Yellowstone, Biscayne, Death Valley, and Virgin Islands National Parks. Since then, I've worked for conservation organizations including World Wildlife Fund, the National Audubon Society, and the Goldman Environmental Foundation.

Awarding prizes for wildlife killing contests is both unethical and inconsistent with our current understanding of natural systems. Such contests are an anachronism and have no place in modern wildlife management. Lethal predator control—that is, the random killing of predator species with the objective of proactively mitigating conflicts with livestock, pets, and humans, or reducing predation on game species—simply does not work. The science is abundantly clear on this.

Another reason to end such wildlife killing contests is the stain they place on all hunting. Most hunters, including myself, consider these contests unethical. They turn the non-hunting public against all hunting and put the future of our outdoor sports at risk.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully ask for your support of SB 723 to end cruel, wasteful, unsporting, and unscientific coyote killing contests in the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Sutton", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Sutton, Former President
California Fish and Game Commission