

# House Bill 2795

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE (at the request of Representative Brian Clem, Representative Bill Post)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Directs State Department of Fish and Wildlife to create pilot program that allows persons to use dogs for hunting, or nonlethal pursuit of, cougars within county electing to participate in pilot-program. Directs department to report to interim committee of Legislative Assembly.

Sunsets program January 2, 2026.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to a pilot program for cougar management.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4       **SECTION 1. (1) Notwithstanding ORS 498.164, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
5 **shall create a pilot program that allows persons to use dogs in the hunting and in the non-**  
6 **lethal pursuit of cougars within a county that elects to participate in the pilot program. The**  
7 **department shall designate wildlife management areas of the following counties as areas in**  
8 **which, subject to elector approval at a county-wide election, the use of dogs in the hunting**  
9 **and in the nonlethal pursuit of cougars is allowed:**

10       **(a) Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, Baker, Grant, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine, Jackson,**  
11 **Linn and Marion; and**

12       **(b) Any county not specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection that, on or after June**  
13 **30, 2022, approves a ballot measure for inclusion in the pilot program.**

14       **(2) The pilot program shall allow for separate hunting and nonlethal pursuit seasons**  
15 **within each county participating in the pilot program.**

16       **(3) The State Fish and Wildlife Commission shall adopt rules to implement the pilot**  
17 **program described in this section. Rules adopted by the commission to implement the pilot**  
18 **program shall:**

19       **(a) Be designed to protect public safety, property and game mammals;**

20       **(b) Be designed to generate data that is necessary for the department to develop the re-**  
21 **port required by section 2 of this 2019 Act;**

22       **(c) Reflect the current and future predictions of cougar populations;**

23       **(d) Reflect the current and future predictions of game mammal populations and rates of**  
24 **taking of game mammals by licensed hunters; and**

25       **(e) Be designed to ensure that the number of cougars prescribed for taking under ORS**  
26 **496.162 is met.**

27       **(4) The commission shall issue cougar tags on an equal footing to persons in counties**  
28 **that participate in the pilot program and persons in counties that do not participate in the**  
29 **pilot program. However, the commission may limit the number of cougars that may be taken**  
30 **in order to ensure that the wildlife policy goals of ORS 496.012 are met.**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1       **SECTION 2.** The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall submit a report in the  
2 manner provided in ORS 192.245, and may include recommendations for legislation, to an in-  
3 terim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to fish and wildlife no later than Sep-  
4 tember 15, 2024. The report shall be on the pilot program conducted pursuant to section 1  
5 of this 2019 Act and shall contain:

6           (1) The names of the counties electing to participate in the pilot program.

7           (2) Information on the efficacy of the pilot program with regard to cougar population  
8 management and a recommendation as to whether the pilot program should be made per-  
9 manent or should be extended. The department shall provide the information on a county-  
10 by-county basis and may also provide the information on a statewide or regional basis.

11          (3) A summary of the population data collected during the pilot program.

12          (4) A recommendation for the development of a comprehensive and effective reporting  
13 system for people to report encounters with and sightings of cougars, bears and wolves.

14          (5) A recommendation for a cougar population management system that focuses on con-  
15 trolling the population level.

16          (6) Identification of nonlethal means that would decrease encounters between humans  
17 and cougars.

18          (7) A summary of deer and elk population status during the pilot program in comparison  
19 with the 10 years prior to the implementation of the pilot program.

20          (8) A summary of any relevant elk predation or nutrition research conducted by the de-  
21 partment.

22       **SECTION 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this 2019 Act are repealed on January 2, 2026.

23       **SECTION 4.** The governing body of each county identified in section 1 (1)(a) of this 2019  
24 Act shall place on the ballot at an election to be held in 2020 on a date specified in ORS  
25 203.085 (1) a county measure asking the electors of the county whether the county shall  
26 participate in a State Department of Fish and Wildlife pilot program allowing the use of dogs  
27 in the hunting and in the nonlethal pursuit of cougars.

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