



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

WILDLIFE • HABITAT • HUNTERS' RIGHTS

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-7313 • Fax (541) 772-0964
oregonhunters.org • oha@ccountry.net

Testimony on HB-4075
Paul Donheffner, Legislative Committee Chairman

This bill has almost nothing to do with coyotes. It really is about legislating a moral or philosophical point of view, and attempting to remove any fun from the legal hunting of coyotes. It does not prohibit the killing of coyotes.

There are over 200,000 coyotes in Oregon, and there are no biological or scientific reasons to limit coyote hunting or contests. Reams of testimony about coyote population dynamics, the role of coyotes in the ecosystems, public surveys and lectures about humane treatment and ethics ONLY hide the real essence of this bill.

Which is one subset of the population attempting to tell another group that they disagree with something and therefore it must be outlawed and criminalized. Simply because you don't like something doesn't give you the right to outlaw it. The US Constitution protects all kinds of speech and activity that others don't like, and this situation is no different. HB-4075 does not achieve a **compelling state interest**.

While I hate to drag in my fishing friends, there is honestly no moral or ethical difference between a coyote contest and a fishing derby or tournament. Different species, but same type of activity. Winners by size, weight and most taken. I hate to think that fishing contests will be the next target, but this is a slippery slope.

I am not here today to defend large commercial coyote contests, which is what prompted this bill. OHA does not conduct, promote or participate in such contests. However, OHA is the victim of collateral damage with the bill as introduced.

OHA has historically held very low key "coyote raffle contests" at the chapter level in places like Lakeview, Klamath Falls, etc. These are **Members Only** contests. **The contests run all year long**. There is no "MASS KILLING", no weigh in or piling of dead coyotes. Members hunt whenever they want and can bring a coyote pelt to a monthly chapter meeting and get a raffle ticket. At the end of the year, during a chapter holiday party, one raffle ticket is picked as a winner.

This is an essential part of the social and cultural fabric of our association. It allows our members to express themselves with a perfectly legal activity, and promotes camaraderie and fellowship among members. As private association activity, it harms nobody. Our association exists to promote hunting and protect hunter rights.

Coyotes kill young fawns, elk and antelope calves, and domestic livestock. Coyotes often eat their prey while it's still alive. It is not cute or pretty. The truth is hunting coyotes protects domestic livestock and other wildlife, and is legal year round. Just last week I had coyotes kill a 2 week old lamb. All that was left was a hoof, jaw bone and nose.

While attempting to ban large commercial contests, this bill inadvertently bans our low key association sponsored raffle contests involving legally taken coyotes. We feel that we are victims of unintended consequences caused by the broad nature of this prohibition. We tried to raise this concern with the same bill in 2019, but nobody was listening.

Fortunately, we have met with Chair Witt to explain our concerns, and he graciously agreed to have the dash-1 amendment drafted. The amendment creates a very narrow exemption for the kind of raffles we hold: by a non-profit association built on hunting, where it is for **members only and there are no cash prizes**. Ours is a simple raffle rather than some big commercial contest open to the public, which is what prompted the original bill.

Please support the dash-1 amendment to exempt our simple, members only, chapter raffle contests.