

My name is Wally Sykes. I've lived in Wallowa County for 25 years and have been involved in wildlife conservation since 2007, working with regional and local conservation groups and county, state and federal agencies. I've monitored wildlife habitat and populations.

During this time my advocacy has brought me into contact with a lot of different perspectives on wildlife, especially about predators. I serve on the Wallowa County Wolf Compensation Committee and have served as a stakeholder in development of the Oregon Wolf Management Plan. I have talked with many hunters and livestock producers over the years and have found that most of them do not harbor hatred or vindictiveness towards predators like coyotes. They just don't want them attacking livestock or, for hunters, taking too many fawns.

I've found that long-time residents, newcomers and outdoor recreationists all appreciate wildlife including coyotes and don't want to see them brutally butchered as they are in these blood-fests.

For cattlemen this is calving time and they'll shoot a coyote near the cows. Hunters may shoot coyotes they blame for poor deer hunting success. But most stockmen and hunters don't participate in mass slaughter like coyote-killing contests, nor do they condone it.

Participants in the killing contests slaughter indiscriminately without credible justification. They're not protecting calves. They're not targeting certain areas with poor deer or elk recruitment. They're just out there killing for the joy of it, and they use every modern device to up the count: electronic calls mimicking distressed pups, silencers, range finders, teams, and at least once a helicopter. These events are about as unsporting as possible.

Coyote-killing contests express deep contempt for wildlife and an even deeper contempt for Oregonians with conservation values, and that means most of us.

Please advance HB2728.

Thank you.