

April 6, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today to ask that you support the continuation of Predator Control Districts in the State of Oregon. I am a fifth generation Douglas County resident and I've raised sheep for most of my life. My current flock, counting ewes and lambs is about 80. I do not own any grazing land of my own. My "gypsy sheep" primarily graze on 10–20-acre parcels in rural residential areas of Douglas County. They graze unwanted vegetation and reduce fire hazard in these wildland-urban-interface areas.

I started this current flock about ten years ago. In the spring of that year, I had around 15 animals and a cougar came in a wiped-out half of my herd. It was a devastating loss both financially and emotionally. It took several years to recover from that loss. Then, about six years ago I had another cougar steal five lambs out of the field with no evidence. The sixth lamb was dropped when the cougar tried to jump out of the field and hit the electric fence. This particular incident occurred about 50 yards from the landowner's front door. We called in the trapper and he was able to identify the predator as a cougar and snare the offending individual.

Almost my entire operation is run with electric fence. This is my first line of defense against predators. I have bell sheep in every group as well. The theory is that the noise is one associated with humans and therefore it keeps the predators at bay. I also use solar powered flashing red lights, particularly in my fields with lambs. I, like most ranchers, take steps to prevent predators from ever coming near my animals. However, this doesn't always work. In my case, shooting predators isn't always a safe option, because of proximity to dwellings, driveways and roads. The option of having Wildlife Services send out someone who is knowledgeable in identifying the type of predator as well as someone skilled in trapping is a valuable resource.

I urge your support of the continuation of the Predator Control Districts.

Sincerely,

Sarah Schartz

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