

Submitter: Sharon Waterman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: HB4080

As a rural Oregonian and natural resource producer, I support HB 4080. The purpose of this bill is only to provide funding for Predator Damage Control Districts. Predator control at the county level has been in existence since before I came to the ranch over 50 years ago. Prior to that time it was a "county trapper". Then the time came where USDA Wildlife Services managed the county program. The purpose of the program was to resolve wildlife conflicts/damage with livestock, timber and infrastructure such as roads, dikes, docks, etc. The second function of the program is for public health and safety involving wildlife. The public's health and safety has always been a priority. Examples are to protect our citizens from bears tearing up garbage cans and entering homes, protecting children from a cougar in a rural residential area, wildlife conflicts in school yards or our rural towns, diseased wildlife, wildlife issues at airports, etc. If you are not a member of the District, you do not pay taxes for the service nor do you get services unless it is a public health and safety issue. The program is set up to target only the animal creating the damage and a professional is removing that animal. Non-lethal methods is a integral part of predator damage control and there is quite a cost in dollars and time to install non-lethal methods but the reality, it also helps the USDA Wildlife Services Specialist to ensure only the animal doing the damage is removed. Not supporting this bill will not change predator damage control. It is an essential tool for wildlife management in rural Oregon. If you have a cougar in your backyard attacking your pet or stalking your child, what are you going to do if this program is not in existence?