



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Fish & Wildlife

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**To: The Honorable Jeff Golden, Chair
Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

Senate Bill 466

Debbie Colbert, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife appreciates the opportunity to provide background relevant to Senate Bill 466 and has no position on the bill. Senate Bill 466 would allow a person that takes pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, deer, elk, moose, or mountain goat under a permit described in ORS 498.012 to offer the game meat to a charitable organization of their choice, retain the game meat for private use, or make any disposition authorized by rule by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The department works cooperatively with landowners to resolve wildlife conflict. Although wildlife conflict can often be resolved with a variety of non-lethal actions, at times lethal take of wildlife is the most effective option. The department strives to develop hunting seasons that will be a tool by which landowner can utilize licensed hunters to address conflicts with game mammals. Options to utilize licensed hunters also includes emergency hunts, Landowner Preference (LOP) tags, and the Oregon Landowner Damage Program. Even so, at times it becomes necessary to utilize kill permits issued pursuant to ORS 498.012 to resolve conflicts with game mammals. These kill permits are issued free of charge. The Department's records show we have not issued a permit under ORS 498.012 for the taking of a bighorn sheep, moose, or mountain goat. For 2020, our most recent year of compiled data, 33 kill permits were issued for deer and 17 for elk across the entire state.

The department's current practice with most kill permits issued under ORS 498.012 is for staff to contact a meat processor and charitable organizations prior to issuing a permit, confirming the charitable organization can take the animals, then designating on the permit where the animal is to be delivered. ORS 619.095 requires that game meat donated to charitable organizations be inspected and certified as safe for human consumption. This inspection is performed by trained department staff or trained Oregon State Police staff. Prior coordination with meat processors and charitable organizations ensures all parties are aware of the game meat inspection requirement. To date the Department has not had challenges finding charitable organizations to take this meat.

Current administrative rules provide a disposition option for elk taken on kill permits with the landowner or their designee able to receive up to one elk per 12-month period when multiple elk are taken under the permit. The department's current practice ensures that at least half of the elk taken under a kill permit goes to a charitable organization.

As described above, current practice largely directs game meat obtained under a kill permit to charitable organizations. SB 466 would authorize any person that uses a kill permit to take one of the game species identified in the bill, whether as the affected landowner or an authorized agent, to retain the game meat for private consumption.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide background information on SB 466.

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