



**ODFW Budget Testimony HB 5509
Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
March 22, 2023**

Restore Predator Control Funding (USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services)

Dear Chairs, Dembrow and Pham, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, today we are requesting continuation of ODFW's share of the state funding for USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) program. WS provides valuable services to Oregon communities, both urban and rural. Wildlife causes significant damage each year to natural resources, public infrastructures, private property, and agriculture. WS plays a crucial role in managing these human-wildlife conflicts.

Oregon's farmers, ranchers, foresters, and rural and urban communities see significant damage due to wildlife each year. These communities often rely on WS wildlife damage control experts to provide technical assistance and help to curb damage by beavers, cougars, coyotes, elk, geese, and other wildlife. WS has a historical track record of mitigating wildlife conflicts, demonstrating the value of WS across the state to reduce depredation and provide on-the-ground technical assistance. A robust predator control program is key to maintaining a full range of tools available to protect people, crops, livestock, pets, and infrastructure from loss.

Unfortunately, the Governor's recommended budget for the 2023-2025 biennium eliminates general funds to WS in the ODFW budget. The zeroing of funding puts the entire WS program in jeopardy—a program that is responsible for responding to tens of thousands of wildlife conflicts annually. The proposed budget also threatens recent county efforts to provide county match dollars for the WS program. WS is a tremendous investment for the state, leveraging approximately 5:1 federal and county dollars to state dollars, respectively. This investment can only continue with state support.

WS addresses a great diversity of human-wildlife conflicts in the state, and the partnership with ODA, ODFW, and WS benefit all of Oregon. We respectfully ask that the committee continue and enhance funding to WS predator control in the ODFW budget. The funding included in the Agency Request Budget highlights the importance of Oregon's farmers and ranchers. This program is leveraged several times over in Oregon communities and provides essential expertise to deal with wildlife damage.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

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