

Submitter: Samuel Mitchell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB769

I am writing today to share my support for SB 769 which takes a necessary step towards balanced wildlife management in Oregon. The 1994 measure which banned the hunting of cougars with dogs by the public took away the only reliable and cost effective method that ODFW had for mountain lion population management in the state. As a result cougar populations and conflicts have soared over population goals in the same time period that mule deer populations have fallen below management goals in every unit in the state. As a futile and much less selective method of harvest due to low hunter success without dogs ODFW practically gives out tags to anyone buying a hunting license. SB 769 allows counties to decide for them selves if hound hunting should be allowed giving a critical management tool back to ODFW within those county boundaries and supporting local democracy. Studies also show that cougars who have been pursued and released by hound hunters have an elevated fear of humans and are less likely to be engaged in conflicts with both people and livestock. In conclusion Oregon needs cougars however it also needs responsible management, SB 769 returns the decision to local government with ODFW regulation allowing a step back towards scientific and research based wildlife management.