

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

I'm reaching out to express my strong support for SB 769, which I see as a constructive step in restoring balance to Oregon's predator-prey dynamics. As an outdoor enthusiast, I've learned that excessive cougar predation is a key factor to persistent and sharp declines in the Oregon mule deer population. While I fully acknowledge habitat loss due to land development and other issues, the data suggests we cannot ignore the role of cougars in the diminishing mule deer populations. Currently, Oregon hands out thousands of cougar tags each year, yet the actual harvest numbers remain extremely low which also makes classifying them as Big Game even harder to understand. Hound hunting was once a proven and selective method for harvesting cougars before it was banned statewide. By allowing individual counties to decide whether to permit hound hunting, we give local communities a voice while still respecting the importance of cougars in our ecosystem. This approach is not about wiping out cougars; it's about maintaining sustainable wildlife populations and responsibly managing Oregon's natural resources.

Thank you for considering this viewpoint,  
Ben Baggett