

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

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 769 as a well balanced wildlife management resolution that would help regulate healthy cougar populations while restoring an important and historical hunting practice.

Since banning the use of dogs for hunting, cougar populations have successfully grown to a number unanimously considered stable and capable of lethal management. However according to a 2015 ODFW study, "current management practices (ie hunting cougars without the use of dogs) are an ineffective method to manipulate cougar population size." All of this has occurred while wild ungulate populations across the state have been in decline. And in reality, the practice of using hounds to hunt and kill cougars in Oregon hasn't ended, it has just been relegated to the State and its agents at the expense of the taxpayers. Allowing hunters to use hounds would allow the ODFW to more effectively regulate the cougar population in the approved counties.

Hunters have been using dogs to hunt game for millennia and well before written history. Hound's men and women and their dogs keep alive a valuable and historic culture. This practice should be available to anyone willing to undergo the hard work and dedication necessary to care for hound dogs, and not just available to the State. It's also important to note that counties who adopt this regulation will still be bound by the ODFW's seasons and quotas and would be an additional tool within the current science-based management framework.

Let us listen to the wildlife biologists, the people and landowners who live close to cougar populations, and take a meaningful attempt to improve the landscape and wildlife across Oregon by passing this bill.

Thank you for the consideration and best regards,
Jeff Beyer