

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

My name is Nick Thompson, and I'm from Prairie City in Grant County. I'm an avid outdoorsman, hunter, and houndsman, and I strongly believe in advocating for wildlife, especially in addressing the issues related to ungulate populations and predators. I've been fortunate to hunt and enjoy the outdoors in some of the most beautiful areas of eastern and northeastern Oregon, and I truly value everything these areas offer.

That said, I fully support predator management, including the use of hounds to both hunt and study mountain lions. It's ironic that the state of Oregon relies on houndsmen to capture and collar cougars for research, yet houndsmen are not legally allowed to do the same in our own state. I've seen firsthand the impacts of mountain lions, both in my current home and in other counties with high cougar populations. In these areas, I've encountered predation on ungulates, including finding killed prey with the telltale sign of a crushed nose, a typical marking of a mountain lion kill.

While I appreciate the strength and beauty of mountain lions, I support the legal use of hounds to selectively hunt them. This method allows for more controlled, purposeful harvests compared to other methods in Oregon, where the outcome is often unpredictable for both the hunter and the animal. It also gives our dogs meaningful work, and helps restore the tradition of hound hunting in Oregon, which has been absent for 30 years.

Selective hunting will help manage mountain lion populations while providing relief for our mule deer and elk herds, which still face two other apex predators. This approach will also benefit small game populations, as studies from other states show that mountain lions significantly impact species such as raccoons, hares, birds, and even domestic animals.

Rural communities are always on alert for potential predator conflicts. Just last week, I learned of two cougar incidents: an acquaintance had to defend their dog from a mountain lion here in my hometown, and ODFW was called to Baker City, in the neighboring county, due to a cougar sighting in town.

I wholeheartedly support SB769 and the use of hounds to pursue and manage mountain lions in Oregon.