

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

I am writing in support of this measure. It has been a long time since dogs were no longer allowed to be used for hunting cougars and it has made a huge difference in the wrong ways. Cougars have continued to grow in population without any real way of managing them. Yes, you can hunt them still but that is an extremely difficult task in itself without any help. Most people who are successful at tagging a cougar do so by just happening to come across them while hunting or have property that they are coming into and starting to cause problems. Allowing dogs back would be a tool to help limit their destruction. I have seen people's livestock destroyed by a cougar that was just doing it for fun and not come back to eat anything. I have seen the devastation from people pets and livelihood torn away from them and having no help or way to combat it. In these areas cougars have plenty of natural food without having to come into livestock, but they are smart and have nothing to deter them away. As the spouse of someone who works with cougar depredation, I know there are not a lot of resources or help for people who are dealing with cougars. There is very little that livestock owners can do until something happens and then the damage is way worse than it really needs to be. The long nights and countless hours spent helping livestock owner's week after week with no way to combat it before it happens takes its toll on everyone. No one wants to see the destruction cougars can do and the loss they can create. Without them really having any natural predators and no way to strongly deter them they have gotten way to comfortable with humans. Allowing dogs back would allow people to have an additional resource to help manage them. Not all areas deal with the same number of cougars or problems and that is why it should be up to the counties to decide and regulate the use of dogs.