

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

Testimony of Annie Maureen Duffy

In Support of Oregon SB 769

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support SB 769, which would allow counties to decide whether to permit the use of dogs in cougar management. This bill is not just about livestock losses; it is about protecting rural families like mine.

On February 6, 2024, two cougars came onto my farm and slaughtered my Gotland sheep breeding stock—two ewes in the early morning and my ram that evening. We have taken every recommended non-lethal precaution: strong wire fencing, electric deterrents, a trained pair of livestock guardian dogs, and a barn. It made no difference. These cougars were bold, unafraid, and determined.

What haunts me most is that this happened in the same pasture where my child, who was 13 at the time, feeds our dogs in the late afternoon. They are now 14 and not much bigger than they were a year ago—roughly the same size as our Great Pyrenees and the sheep. What if the cougars had chosen differently? My older child does his morning and evening chores alone in the barn, which is less than 50 yards from our house. He is a young adult with autism, and is small and unthreatening—just as vulnerable as the sheep that were killed. We also have an 18-month-old baby who wants to spend time playing outside, making the presence of fearless cougars an even greater concern. The lack of fear these predators exhibit makes it increasingly dangerous to be a child in the country. How am I supposed to trust that my family is safe when even my best-trained dogs and secure fencing cannot protect our farm?

The loss of these sheep was not just a setback—it was a major financial blow. We fed our breeding stock all winter, expecting lambs in the spring that would either be grown out for slaughter or selected for future breeding. The cougars wiped out that entire investment in a single night, leaving us with nothing to show for the months of care and resources we had poured into these animals. It also deeply affected my child, who has always had a strong connection with our lambs.

We are constantly told to use non-lethal methods first. We have done our part. But

when non-lethal deterrents fail and we are left defenseless, what options remain? The ability to use trained dogs to manage cougar populations is essential for rural communities. Without it, predators like these grow fearless, knowing there are no consequences.

I implore you to pass SB 769. My family, my animals, and my children's safety depend on it.

Sincerely,  
Annie Maureen Duffy  
Everfree Farm, Philomath, Oregon