

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

I speak to you as an owner of agricultural land and livestock, as well as a veterinarian and a proud Oregonian. I oppose SB 769 for a multitude of reasons. Many have already been addressed. I would like to offer my perspective.

The majority of Oregonians appreciate cougars or mountain lions and would not like them hunted at all, much less by hounds. As someone who has lived in Douglas and Crook counties, side by side with cougars, I agree. I have seen them, seen evidence of them and I appreciate their role in the landscape. I choose to live in cougar country and I wouldn't want to see them punished because a minority of people who don't value and understand them want them exterminated.

I have never had a cougar (or wolf/large predator) conflict occur with any of my animals. I provide them with safe housing and use safe deterrents for predator species around my home and animals. It is my choice to live in the country where large predators are often found and they should not be punished for it.

The will of Oregonians and the nation is that our apex predators are of value. The science proves it and there is plenty of sentiment to back it up. When cougars are killed, their territory becomes unbalanced. New and often inexperienced cougars will move in and are more likely to cause conflict. Research has consistently shown that trophy hunting and predator control of cougars exacerbates human, pet, and livestock conflicts.

Oregon already allows trophy hunting of cougars and ranks fifth highest nationwide for hunting mortality of these large cats. Oregon is one of only a few states that allow year-round hunting of cougars, even when kittens are likely dependent on their mothers.

For another perspective, as a veterinarian, I have seen the dogs used for hunting brought back torn up and gravely injured when I worked in a neighboring state. I have also been involved in a few cases where hunting hounds were abandoned in the woods. Frequently, dogs used for hunting are poorly treated, don't receive routine medical care and undergo extreme suffering when injured while hunting wild animals. This is just another inhumane aspect of hunting large predators with dogs. The people of Oregon don't want this to happen. They have voted against it more than once. Please don't circumvent the will of the people of the Green State.

I will close by saying that it is a unique and humbling experience to see a mountain lion in the wild. I am eternally grateful for the experience as they are notoriously private and quiet animals. They are learning how to coexist with humans who have invaded their territory. I think we owe them the same.