

Submitter: Thea Hayes
On Behalf Of: Self
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB769

As a taxpaying citizen of Oregon, I oppose any form of exception for dog-hunting of predators, including cougars. There are multiple reasons for my opposition:

There needs to be viable populations of predators in our natural ecosystems, and humans have systematically removed them from multiple environments resulting in imbalances in natural controls of prey organisms. This results in increases of disease spreading as well as other system-wide effects at every trophic level (including vegetation).

There is little advanced knowledge for most hunters to selectively target problem animals that need to be removed from habitats.

Hunting dogs can chase and harass species not intended to be targeted.

The use of packs of hunting dogs is both cruel to animals relentlessly chased, cornered and killed, as well as potentially causing the suffering of young separated from their mothers.

Hunting dogs can be seriously maimed and killed by cougars defending themselves. Chase by packs of hunting dogs can result in panic and erratic, unpredictable behavior by stressed cougars.

Cougars can be selectively removed from ecosystems by wildlife experts using individual and paired dogs and tranquilizers, where animals can be examined, possibly tagged and identified for possible removal from ecosystems when necessary.