

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

My name is Jillian Barker and I live near Mosier, Oregon in the Columbia River Gorge. I have been a resident of Oregon for 50 years where my husband and I own over 300 acres of rural forestland. We are very much opposed to SB 769 for many reasons.

In 1994 we collected many signatures that helped put Measure 18 on the ballot which was then passed by a majority of voters. This measure banned the cruel and unfair hunting of cougars with radio-collared hounds, with a few exceptions. A majority of Oregon voters have already voted twice (again in 1996) to oppose the unsporting use of radio-collared hounds to hunt cougars.

Even without the the aid of radio-collared hounds, between 2011 and 2021 the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) states that at least 4600 cougars were killed by these trophy hunters in Oregon, not even counting their kittens that were often also destroyed in the grim process.

It is believed by many wildlife experts that ODFW has allowed cougar hunting kill levels to exceed sustainable population numbers. In Oregon, cougars can even be hunted year-round.

Considering this unsustainable level of cougar-killing, we must not allow this unfair hunting practice to ever become legal in Oregon. We ask you to please not overturn the will of the people of Oregon who still do not want this inhumane trophy hunting with collared hounds to become legal. In 2019 a poll by the Remington Research Group found that the majority of voters, 65%, are still opposed to the trophy hunting of Oregon's cougars. Additionally, SB 769 would allow counties to "opt out" of Measure 18, denying the will of Oregonians and the spirit of the initiative process itself, which is totally unacceptable.

Cougars have intrinsic value in their own right and play an important role in the balance of natural systems in our environment and with its inhabitants. These magnificent predators have always resided in this landscape and now even have to learn to coexist with our invasive human species. They are not a threat to humans when treated with respect, common sense and given the space to exist in peace as they always have.

Our species must learn that cougars are not just objects for our entertainment and sport! Please oppose this legislation that would weaken or actually repeal Measure 18. Thank you for your attention.