



Testimony in Opposition to Oregon Senate Bill 769

February 11, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Friends of the Columbia Gorge is writing to express opposition to Senate Bill 769, which proposes allowing individual counties to exempt themselves from the statewide prohibition on using dogs to hunt or pursue cougars, contingent upon voter approval. This bill poses significant risks to wildlife conservation, public safety, and the integrity of Oregon's wildlife management framework.

Friends is a non-profit organization with approximately 5,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area ("National Scenic Area" or "Gorge").

Oregon's current ban on using dogs to hunt cougars, established by Measure 18 in 1994, reflects a statewide consensus on ethical hunting practices and wildlife conservation. Allowing counties to individually opt out of this ban could lead to a fragmented approach to wildlife management, undermining the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) comprehensive strategies. Wildlife management requires cohesive policies that transcend county lines, as wildlife populations do not adhere to political boundaries.

Senate Bill 769 threatens to erode the consistent and ethical wildlife management practices that Oregon has developed over decades. I urge the committee to consider the broader implications of this bill and to prioritize non-lethal, ethical approaches to managing cougar populations. I respectfully request a NO vote on SB 769.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Renee Tkach
Conservation Director