

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

I am writing to express my support for the reintroduction of hunting mountain lions with dogs in the state of Oregon. I believe that reinstating this practice is essential not only for managing the mountain lion population but also for addressing the severe decline of the mule deer population, a significant issue that has been affecting Oregon's wildlife ecosystem for over three decades.

Since the early 1990s, when hunting mountain lions with dogs was outlawed, Oregon has witnessed a marked decrease in mule deer populations. While there are a variety of factors contributing to this decline, one major element has been the unregulated increase in mountain lion numbers. Without the ability to control their population effectively through regulated hunting, mountain lions have become an unchecked predator, disproportionately preying on mule deer, which in turn affects other species within the ecosystem.

The positive impact of utilizing dogs to hunt mountain lions is well-documented. This method is an efficient and humane way to control mountain lion numbers, allowing for targeted population management that prevents over-predation of mule deer and other wildlife. By reintroducing this practice, we can help restore a balance between predator and prey, ensuring that mule deer populations are allowed to recover and thrive.

Furthermore, the use of dogs to track and hunt mountain lions ensures that only problem animals are taken, which reduces unnecessary harm to other wildlife and helps preserve the integrity of the ecosystem. This approach allows hunters to be more precise in their efforts, minimizing the risk to non-target species and improving the overall health of our wildlife.

In addition to its ecological benefits, reintroducing regulated hunting with dogs will have economic advantages as well. It will support local economies by encouraging responsible hunting, providing opportunities for hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and businesses that depend on wildlife management and conservation.

I strongly urge you to consider the reintroduction of hunting mountain lions with dogs as a critical step in restoring the balance of Oregon's ecosystems and ensuring the long-term health of mule deer populations. This measure represents a scientifically-backed and responsible approach to wildlife management that will have lasting benefits for both the environment and the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your support in reestablishing this crucial practice.

Sincerely,
Wyatt Shelley