

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

To the Legislators of the State of Oregon,

I write in support of SB 769, which would allow individual counties to decide whether dogs can be used in the pursuit of cougars.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, formalized in 2001, establishes that wildlife is a public trust resource. A key responsibility of wildlife management is ensuring species' long-term health to maintain balanced ecosystems, particularly through predator-prey relationships.

In Oregon, certain species—such as cougars—have been anthropomorphized due to their appearance, elusiveness, or cultural depictions. This has led to unchecked population growth, increasing human-wildlife conflicts and significantly impacting prey species like deer, elk, and sheep.

Cougars, especially males, are solitary and territorial, making them incredibly difficult to harvest without the use of dogs. ODFW data shows that fewer than 1% of hunters are successful in harvesting a cougar. Many hunters go their entire lives without ever seeing one. When they do, typically while pursuing other game, they may take the shot regardless of the animal's age or sex.

Allowing the use of dogs for cougar hunting would enable more targeted management, helping maintain a balanced population alongside prey species, other wildlife, and humans.

Counties should have the right to determine how their wildlife populations are managed. I urge you to consider the testimony of local citizens, biologists, and those with firsthand experience, and approve SB 769.

Tate Doolittle