

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

I support SB 769 because it restores a measure of autonomy to Oregon counties in dealing with cougar populations that have grown significantly in recent years. I've read about how pre-hound-ban practices allowed for more selective and humane harvests by giving hunters the ability to identify the sex and maturity of the animal before taking a shot. This method helped ensure that fewer female cougars with dependent cubs were mistakenly killed. Now, despite issuing thousands upon thousands of cougar tags, we see minimal results, which indicates that our current system is not effectively managing the balance between cougars and their prey. Furthermore, many rural Oregonians feel neglected when it comes to wildlife policy, and they bear the brunt of cougar-related conflicts, such as livestock depredation and concerns about children's safety. SB 769 doesn't force hound hunting on anyone; it simply places the decision in the hands of local voters who are most affected. I believe this approach is both equitable and rooted in sound science.

Thank you,
Shane Felton