

March 24, 2025

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use,
Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court St NE
Salem, Oregon



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www.predatordefense.org

RE: In OPPOSITION to HB 2403 - Allowing establishment of predator damage control districts

Dear Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing as executive director Predator Defense, a national wildlife nonprofit based in Oregon. My work in this position over the last 35 years has centered around exposing the real-world impacts of USDA Wildlife Services across the West, documenting and investigating first-hand many of the victims of their work right here in Oregon. This included the loss of countless nontarget animals to traps and poisons, including endangered species and beloved dogs. It also included human injuries. I can with certainty say that Wildlife Services remains an unaccountable agency that wastes countless taxpayer funds in a counter-productive effort to control predators. It has no place being encouraged on Oregon's landscape.

HB 2403 is problematic on many levels. In setting forth local "predator damage districts" to collect money from landowners so they can have agents of Wildlife Services kill Oregon wildlife deemed a threat to private property, it would target essential native predators like wolves, bears, bobcats, foxes, cougars, beavers, and coyotes, which are vital to ecosystems. The bill includes a provision specifically designed to prevent the public from holding these special districts accountable. It would also authorize them to raise money for killing wildlife without even considering use of abundant nonlethal alternatives like livestock guardian animals, foxlights, penning, fladry, range riding, and livestock carcass disposal.

Even greater problems with HB 2403 stem from the fact that scientific proof that Wildlife Services methods of controlling livestock damage work is markedly lacking. The best available science shows that killing carnivores is counter-productive, as it worsens conflicts with livestock and often increases predator reproduction rates. In addition, countless taxpayer dollars are wasted by spending far more to kill predators than the actual cost of the damage they cause. We should not be increasing any funding that goes toward counter-productively killing wildlife using inhumane methods. Any state-created funding mechanism to resolve human-wildlife conflict should mandate using effective nonlethal alternatives at every opportunity.

This bill is unacceptable. Coexistence with essential native predators is key, especially in this age of extinction.

If you aren't inclined to take my word for it, take the word of former employees of Wildlife Services who became whistleblowers. Many couldn't sleep at night after the work they did. Three are featured in our award-winning film, "Exposed: USDA's Secret War on Wildlife," viewable at www.predatordefense.org/exposed. This is a film that Dr. Jane Goodall said she wants millions to watch. She also said:

"I have just watched 'EXPOSED' and two emotions vie with each other: First, horror that cruelty of this magnitude and scale has been perpetrated, for so long, in the name of the American government. And second, great admiration for the brave men who, jeopardizing personal safety and future employment, spoke out against the atrocities that they saw perpetrated, and admitted having perpetrated themselves. This is the 21st Century. There is indisputable evidence that we are not the only beings on planet earth to know mental and physical suffering. For years I have heard stories of this kind of barbaric behavior – and now Americans will learn, through watching 'EXPOSED,' of the unforgivable actions of those who have exercised their power to cause untold agony to thousands of innocent fellow creatures on our planet."

For all that is wild and free,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brooks Fahy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Brooks Fahy
Executive Director