

To:
Co-Chairs Helm and Owens
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR

Date: 03.24.2025

Letter of Opposition for HB 2403

On behalf of Think Wild, a nonprofit wildlife hospital and conservation organization dedicated to inspiring the high desert community to care for and protect native wildlife through education, conservation, rescue, and rehabilitation, we urge you to oppose HB 2403. This bill, as currently written, lacks critical safeguards to ensure responsible, humane, and science-based predator management in Oregon.

We have two main concerns with HB 2403, the first being the lack of mandated nonlethal conflict prevention prior to lethal removal. At Think Wild, we prioritize coexistence strategies that prevent human-wildlife conflicts through education and nonlethal deterrence. Our Humane Wildlife Services program exclusively implements nonlethal solutions, which have proven to be effective, long term solutions to human-wildlife conflicts. Since program inception, we have responded to over 400 community inquiries using humane, sustainable methods based on natural history, such as exclusion installations, one way doors, deterrents, hazing and more. HB 2403 fails to require counties or landowners to attempt nonlethal methods before resorting to lethal control of predatory mammals, instead increasing reliance on outdated, short-sighted and controversial practices—particularly those used by USDA Wildlife Services, such as trapping, poisoning, and aerial gunning. These methods not only raise ethical concerns but also do not effectively address the underlying causes of human-wildlife conflicts, which Think Wild strives to identify and resolve.

Secondly, the predator control methods defined in the bill undermine biodiversity and ecosystem health—both of which are paramount to Think Wild’s mission. As an organization committed to restoring healthy habitats and biodiversity, we recognize the vital role predators play in ecosystem balance and prioritize this understanding in every community inquiry we receive. Indiscriminately removing predators can disrupt food chains, lead to prey overpopulation, degrade habitats, and exacerbate human-wildlife conflicts, as others of the same species often move in to replace them after lethal control.

Ultimately, HB 2403 does not reflect Oregon’s conservation values and undermines the efforts of organizations like Think Wild, which work to promote stewardship, coexistence and ecological resilience. We urge legislators to oppose this bill in its current form and advocate for policies that prioritize nonlethal management, science based methods, and responsible wildlife stewardship.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Oregon’s wildlife and wild places.

Sincerely,
Think Wild