



March 28, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee On Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon

Re: SB 5502 (ODA budget)

Chairs Frederick and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Wildlife Coalition (OWC) is a coalition of wildlife conservation groups working proactively and collaboratively to advocate for policies that are science based and humane and reflect the state's conservation values. Members of the coalition are Bird Alliance of Oregon, Cascadia Wildlands, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Voters Oregon, Humane World for Animals, Oregon Wild, Think Wild, Western Environmental Law Center, and Willamette Riverkeeper.

OWC supports the Governor's proposal to eliminate "predator control" funding from the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) budget.¹ OWC opposes any restoration of funding for that purpose.

Appropriations to ODA for "predator control" are passed through to Wildlife Services, a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that overemphasizes the killing of wildlife – using cruel methods including leghold traps, neck snares, shooting from planes and gassing dens of pups – as a solution to human-wildlife conflict. (See ['That's a bloodbath': How a federal program kills wildlife for private interests](#), NPR investigation (2024); [Exposed – USDA's Secret War on Wildlife](#) (short documentary film); [The Rogue Agency](#), Harper's Magazine (2016).) In 2023, the most recent year for which data is available, Wildlife Services killed 124,826 wild animals in Oregon, including 237 bears, 3,202 coyotes, 114 mountain lions, and 80 red foxes using methods including neck and leg snares, steel-jawed leghold traps, cage traps, and aerial gunning; and 55 coyote and red fox dens, where young pups are kept, were gassed.²

Moreover, scientific evidence increasingly shows that Wildlife Service's lethal and often indiscriminate approaches (i.e., not targeting specific problem animals) are not effective at reducing human-wildlife conflict and may, in fact, increase conflict by disrupting the territorial and social structures of the animals and leading to effects such as "compensatory breeding." See [Effects of Human Hunting on Cougar and Human Conflicts](#), 17-minute video presentation by Dr. Robert Wielgus, leading carnivore researcher (2023); and [Killing Coyotes Is Not As Effective As](#)

¹ The Governor's proposed budget would reduce spending on this program by \$545,660.

² [Wildlife Services Program Data Reports 2023](#).

[Once Thought, Researchers Say](#), National Public Radio (2019).³

Management of human-wildlife conflict in Oregon needs to be restructured to better use nonlethal deterrents and to require more humane methods for any necessary lethal control. For example, instead of passing money through to Wildlife Services for “predator control,” ODA could operate a grant program that helps farmers and ranchers with nonlethal deterrent measures such as those used by the [Benton County Agriculture & Wildlife Protection Program](#). (See, e.g., [HB 2698 \(2023\)](#), which proposed such a grant fund.) Until that happens, ODA should not receive funding for “predator control” because that funding will simply be passed through to the existing Wildlife Services program.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Brian Posewitz

On behalf of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition:

Bird Alliance of Oregon

Cascadia Wildlands

Defenders of Wildlife

Humane Voters Oregon

Humane World for Animals

Think Wild

Oregon Wild

Western Environmental Law Center

Willamette Riverkeeper

³ See also, [Scientific Opinion Letter](#), Yellowstone Ecological Research Center (2023). Elbroch et al, “Perspective: Why might removing carnivores maintain or increase risks for domestic animals?” *Biological Conservation*, Volume 283 (2023); Lambert et al., “Cougar Population Dynamics and Viability in the Pacific Northwest.”; Peebles et al., “Effects of Remedial Sport Hunting on Cougar Complaints and Livestock Depredations.” Teichman, Cristescu, and Darimont, “Hunting as a Management Tool? Cougar-Human Conflict Is Positively Related to Trophy Hunting.” J. A. Dellinger et al., “Temporal Trends and Drivers of Mountain Lion Depredation in California, USA ” *Human–Wildlife Interactions* 15, no. 1 (2021). J. Polisar et al., “Jaguars, Pumas, Their Prey Base, and Cattle Ranching: Ecological Interpretations of a Management Problem,” *Biol Conserv* 109 (2003); J. A. Shivik, A. Treves, and P. Callahan, “Nonlethal Techniques for Managing Predation: Primary and Secondary Repellents,” *Conservation Biology* 17, no. 6 (2003); A. Treves and K. U. Karanth, “Special Section: Human-Carnivore Conflict: Local Solutions with Global Applications,” *ibid.*; “Human-Carnivore Conflict and Perspectives on Carnivore Management Worldwide,” *Conservation Biology* 17, no. 6 (2003).