



HUMANE VOTERS | OREGON

July 31, 2019

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court St NE Ste 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Re: "Predator Control" Funding in HB 5050

Dear Governor Brown:

Humane Voters Oregon is a nonprofit organization that works in Oregon's political process and elections to promote humane treatment of animals. We are not affiliated with any other state or national organization, but we have board members from several different places within Oregon's animal welfare community.

We join with other groups and individuals in urging you to veto additional funding in House Bill 5050 (the "Christmas Tree Bill") for "predator control." HB 5050 adds \$400,000 for this purpose to the budgets of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (evenly split). Our understanding is that this money will be passed through to Wildlife Services, which is a division of the United States Department of Agriculture. Wildlife Services, misleadingly named, will then use the money to kill native predators including wolves, cougars and coyotes, primarily in the name of protecting farm animals from predation.

We oppose this additional funding for the following reasons:

1. Wild predators are not a major threat to farm animals. Far more farm animals die, before being slaughtered for food, from illness and weather.¹
2. Scientific evidence shows predators self-regulate their populations and that killing them to prevent predation may be counterproductive because it triggers "compensatory breeding" and destabilizes population structures.²

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¹ See, e.g., <https://wildearthguardians.org/historical-archive/livestock-losses/> and sources cited there.

² See, e.g., https://faculty.nelson.wisc.edu/treves/pubs/Treves_Krofel_McManus.pdf; <https://www.iflscience.com/plants-and-animals/top-predators-limit-their-own-numbers/> (self-regulation); 2017 Oregon Cougar Management Plan, <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/cougar/>, p. 38.

3. Wildlife Services approaches these issues with an outdated culture contrary to the values of most Oregonians. It kills extraordinary numbers of animals every year with inhumane methods including poisoning, gassing, trapping, snaring and shooting from aircraft. In its 2018 fiscal year, for example, Wildlife Services killed nearly 3,000 mammals in Oregon, including 30 bobcats, 79 black bears, 152 cougars and 2,514 coyotes (including 19 dens of puppies using poison and hand tools, 788 adults with leg-hold traps, 863 with neck snares, 55 with guns from helicopters and 277 with guns from air planes).³

For these and other reasons, we hope you will veto the “predator control” funding in HB 5050. Thank you for considering our comments on this issue.

Sincerely,

Brian Posewitz
Director/Secretary

³ See https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/pdr/?file=PDR-G_Report?p=2018:INDEX;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSV8pRLkdKI>.