



April 14, 2019

Members of the Oregon Senate,

The above Oregon-based and national conservation and animal welfare organizations support SB 723 to prohibit coyote killing contests, in which participants compete to kill the heaviest or the most coyotes for the chance to win prizes. Also attached is a letter in support from Mike Finley, chair of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

We recognize that the state's policy intent with this legislation is to end these contests because they inflict random and egregious cruelty and suffering on a native wildlife species whose presence is essential for a healthy and thriving ecosystem.

Oregon's wildlife is held and managed in the public's trust, and as such, coyote killing contests violate the spirit and tenets of responsible stewardship, sportsmanship, and respect for the public's wildlife. Motivated by the financial rewards of killing the most or heaviest coyotes, participants are not likely to abide by the rules and values embraced by ethical sportsmen and sportswomen. Therefore, there is a compelling state interest in ending coyote killing contests to prevent animal cruelty, uphold the state's longstanding hunting tradition of respect for the hunted, and to protect our wildlife from non-science-based, mass killings that are likely to be viewed as barbaric, cruel, and wasteful by the majority of Oregonians.

Additionally, science has amply demonstrated that the indiscriminate, mass killing of coyotes is not an effective means of mitigating conflicts with livestock. To this point, a recent issue of *Oregon Small Farm News* highlighted research finding that lethal control of coyotes only increased livestock losses, and that coyotes with no record of livestock depredation, and who have established themselves in a territory that overlaps with sheep pastures, can actually prevent livestock losses by excluding coyotes from

neighboring packs who may have learned to kill sheep. A burgeoning list of research studies also indicate that the mass killing of coyotes will not increase populations of game species.

Contests that encourage the indiscriminate killing of large numbers of animals are deeply at odds with the humane values of Oregonians. A recent poll by the Remington Research Group underscores those values, with more than three fourths of Oregonians who were polled agreeing that native carnivores like coyotes play a vital role in Oregon's ecosystems, and a strong majority of those polled saying they support legislation to ban these contests.

For the above reasons, we support the passage of SB 723 to end cruel, unsporting and gruesome coyote killing contests in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

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