

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



July 16, 2015

Bradley Smith, Ph.D., Chair
Fish and Wildlife Commission
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, Washington 98501-1091

Re: Rule Amendment to Increase Cougar Quotas

Dear Chair Smith and Commission Members,

We are writing in complete support of the Commission's recent decision to increase cougar harvest (for a period of three years) in GMU areas where there is an overlap of wolf populations.

We are aware that the Commission is going to discuss a petition it received which in essence would reverse the Commission's rule and return to the old cougar harvest numbers. We do not support that petition nor should the Commission consider any further amendment to its rule. It will be all but impossible to garner enough data to scientifically discern any meaningful information and/or trends if the Commission reduces the three year timeframe.

As you know, Northeastern Washington is home to multiple predator species, including twelve of the sixteen wolf packs state-wide. As a result, our region's ungulate (deer, elk and moose) populations are at an incredible risk for increased stress and predation. Hunting opportunities are significantly at risk as well if the Department does not take a more holistic approach in our region to the management of predators as a whole and the impact such numbers and species have on our ungulates. It is crucial to minimize these threats if our region is to sustain healthy and productive numbers of ungulates.

Local citizens continue to share information (as recently as last weekend) on the increased sightings of cougars in very non-traditional areas of our region. As you know, our hands have been repeatedly tied over the years in being able to effectively manage the predator increases we are experiencing. Frankly, we are very concerned that these sightings are ultimately going to increase risk for the safety of our citizens, families, animals and livestock. Our citizens, ranchers and wildlife continue to be at the epicenter of an influx of predators.

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We implore the Commission to move toward a more holistic approach in managing predators. The Commission's proposal is certainly a good step in that direction. Therefore, we strongly urge the Commission to stay the course and allow increased cougar harvests (for a period of three years) in GMUs that overlap with wolves.

Cordially,



SHELLY SHORT
State Representative
7th Legislative District
Caucus Chair



JOEL KRETZ
State Representative
7th Legislative District
Republican Deputy Leader



BRIAN DANSEL
State Senator
7th Legislative District

Cc: Larry Carpenter, Vice-Chair
David Graybill
Jay Holzmilller
Jay Kehne
Robert "Bob" Kehoe
Conrad Mahnken
Kim Thornburn
Miranda Wecker