

Exhibit C

**Public Correspondence received as of
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OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, Oregon 97302
RE: Oregon's Cougar Management Plan Revision
Sept. 20, 2016

Dear Chair Finley and Members of the ODFW Commission:

OHA is Oregon's largest hunting and conservation based group with close to 10,000 members, and our membership has a very strong interest in the future management strategies that will be described in the upcoming plan revision. In April, 2016 OHA participated in a panel discussion at the Commission meeting held in Bandon. This format offered an opportunity for stakeholders to express concerns and interests for the plan revision in greater detail. At that time, OHA expressed concerns that cougar populations were not being regulated enough to maintain huntable populations of big game in certain management units within Oregon. Overall, this state's cougar population has doubled since 1994, going from an estimated 3,000 to well over 6,000 estimated today. It is imperative that adaptive management practices have as many tools available as possible for this species management moving into the next planning cycle.

OHA recommends that the next plan suggest continued hunting opportunities, as currently applied, and harvest monitoring for the 6 established management zones. In addition, ODFW needs to look at options for applying **cougar management areas**, or more refined "target areas," where removal is conducted to benefit other social and economic interest of our state such as big game hunting and livestock raising. The new plan should develop language that precisely defines these special management areas in regards to type, size, and circumstances when they are appropriate to administer. ODFW has a strong track record for monitoring harvest but is less strong in monitoring cougar populations in certain, critical areas. OHA suggests applying the services of more trained houndsmen (qualified agents), surveying with science-based detection objectives, to improve cougar population estimates. Ungulate herd health monitoring in these areas needs to extend longer, over a minimum of 3 years, to better assess ungulate recruitment and survival.

This raises the question, when and where should special cougar management areas be applied?

From a hunting perspective this should be when and where doe:fawn, or cow:calf ratios repeatedly fall below an acceptable level, combined with cougar population surveys indicating a high density – with both variables being determined by appropriate ODFW staff. The subsequent "management action

prescription" should also look at the option of using smaller sub-units rather than entire Wildlife Management Unit to also consider cougar population viability factors.

Thank you very much for this input opportunity and OHA looks forward to continued involvement with updating the Cougar Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Jim Akenson

Jim Akenson
Conservation Director
Oregon Hunters Association