

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

Illegal take and/or poaching of big game can have serious consequences for wildlife populations. If the level of poaching is high in an area, it can have an additive impact on harvestable surplus and may lead to reductions of future hunting and viewing opportunities.

In Oregon, enforcement of the wildlife laws is the responsibility of the Oregon State Police (OSP). Effective enforcement of wildlife violations by the OSP often relies on information provided by witnesses to the crime. For over 30 years, the OSP and the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) have collaboratively used the “Turn in Poachers” (TIP) program which provides a monetary reward to persons who report violations that prohibit unlawful killing or taking of wildlife, and/or destruction of habitat.

In an effort to provide further incentive for persons to report violations of the wildlife laws, the 2017 Oregon Legislative Assembly directed development of a program that allows provisions for offering preference points for Controlled Hunts in lieu of a cash reward. Specifically, persons providing information leading to citations or arrest for unlawful take, possession, or waste of antelope, bear, cougar, deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, mountain sheep, or wolf can choose either preference points or cash as reward for providing the information. Ultimately, the desire is to increase the number of reports of violations by hunters, anglers, and other users of Oregon’s landscape.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

ODFW staff convened a small working group to develop draft rules implementing this program. The working group consisted of representatives from OSP, OHA, and Department staff. All representatives had direct experience with the controlled hunt and preference point process, hunting regulation enforcement, and the existing TIP program.

The working group’s objective was to develop a preference point scale that would act as sufficient incentive for increased participation in the TIP program, be consistent with statutory intent, and not overload the pool of existing preference point holders. Popularity of each big game species was considered when establishing point reward level, as well as existing restitution value and existing TIP cash reward values.

After the draft rules were developed, information was included in the twenty public meetings held throughout the state in July to review staff proposals for the Big Game Seasons and Regulations. The limited input from the meetings indicated general support for the concept with some difference of opinion on number of points to award.

### ISSUE 1

**Implement a program allowing allocation of preference points in lieu of cash rewards for participating in the “Turn-in-Poachers” program.**

### ANALYSIS

The 2017 Oregon Legislative assembly directed the commission to develop a process that encourages people to report violations of wildlife laws by providing preference points as an incentive in lieu of a cash reward. The statute is very specific as to the wildlife species and type of wildlife violations. A person is eligible to receive preference points for the TIP program if they provide

information that leads to an arrest or citation for three wildlife crimes: unlawful take, possession, or waste. These violations need to involve antelope, bear, cougar, deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, mountain sheep, or wolf. Persons providing this information must ask to receive the preference points in lieu of the cash reward, and must possess or be able to possess a license during the current calendar year.

We propose two levels of preference point value. For species with special status or lifetime hunting opportunity limitations (moose, mountain goat, mountain sheep, and wolf), the point reward value is five preference points. Point values are the same for male and female of each species. For all other big game species (antelope, bear, cougar, deer, and elk), the point reward value is four preference points. It varies within each controlled hunt series, but generally four preference points would allow hunters to successfully draw 69% of the controlled hunts that use preference points.

The system also accounts for violations involving multiple animals. Points will be awarded using the species or animal with the highest point value as a base plus one point for each addition animal or species. For example, a report leading to citations issued for one moose, one elk and one deer would receive seven points total (five for the moose, one for the elk, and one for the deer). Within a species, if a person provides information where the violation includes unlawful take of two cow elk during a bull season, the preference points rewarded would be four for the first cow, plus one for second cow; five preference points total.

Multiple people may also receive points if they report the same violation. If OSP determines the information led to an arrest or a citation, each individual receives the same total amount of preference points.

The process of awarding points is relatively simple. Working directly with the person(s) providing information, the local OSP officer first determines if the information led to an arrest or citation, and then determines whether the person selects a preference point reward in lieu of the cash reward. The officer then forwards the "Request for Reward" form to OSP Headquarters for review. Upon approval, the request is sent to ODFW Licensing where staff contact the eligible individuals. The final step is for individuals receiving preference point rewards to complete the selection form where they determine which species the points are applied to. Points cannot be split among species.

**OPTIONS**

1. Adopt staff recommendations
2. Amend staff recommendations

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

Option 1.

**DRAFT MOTION**

I move to amend OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 001 as proposed by staff.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon Filing