
SENATE BILL 5881

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Honeyford, Hargrove, Morton, Mulliken and Schoesler

Read first time 02/11/2005. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to a cougar survey and management program; creating
2 new sections; and declaring an emergency.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) Washington's increasing cougar and human populations, and
6 decreasing cougar habitat, create new management challenges;

7 (b) The Washington department of fish and wildlife, the agency with
8 authority over cougar control, acknowledges responding to over five
9 hundred complaints a year regarding urban sightings, attacks on
10 livestock and pets, and cougar confrontations with humans;

11 (c) A 1996 initiative limited the hunting of cougars and some other
12 species with the aid of bait or the use of hunting hound dogs, though
13 the initiative did allow the state to authorize the use of hounds to
14 control cougar populations for public safety; and

15 (d) The initiative has resulted in a reduction in the number of
16 cougar harvested during the cougar hunting season, and this has in turn
17 resulted in an increase in the number of cougar/human confrontations
18 and cougar attacks on livestock and pets.

1 (2) The legislature therefore intends to initiate a survey of
2 cougar populations and encounters to help the state and participating
3 county legislative authorities create a dangerous cougar management
4 program that minimizes cougar incidents and executes more timely and
5 effective actions when incidents threaten public safety or property.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of fish and wildlife, in
7 full cooperation and collaboration with each county legislative
8 authority that elects to participate, shall complete a comprehensive
9 cougar survey of that county in order to assess and identify:

- 10 (a) The most current cougar population data in the county;
- 11 (b) The number of cougar encounters with humans, by type and
12 location, in the county;
- 13 (c) The number of livestock and pet depredations, by type and
14 location, in the county; and
- 15 (d) Actions taken through existing cougar depredation permits,
16 public safety cougar hunts, or other existing wildlife management tools
17 to deal with cougar incidents in the county.

18 (2) Using survey results and other pertinent data, the department
19 of fish and wildlife shall establish a dangerous cougar management and
20 incident response program for that county. The program shall be
21 designed to generate the data necessary to minimize cougar incidents
22 and execute more timely and effective actions when incidents threaten
23 public safety or property.

24 (3) The department of fish and wildlife must report survey results
25 for each participating county to the fish and wildlife commission and
26 the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2005.
27 The report shall also recommend:

- 28 (a) Legislative or other changes needed to improve the dangerous
29 cougar management and incident response program;
- 30 (b) Methods to more effectively collect, share, and use incident
31 reporting data to minimize cougar incidents and inform future cougar
32 management decisions; and
- 33 (c) Legislative or other changes needed to foster more timely and
34 effective response actions to protect public safety and property.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate

1 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
2 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
3 immediately.

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