



Governor signs bills affecting guns & hunting

By Al Elkins & Amy Patrick, OHA Lobbyists
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OHA is happy to report that our two bills, HB 3152, the residency definition bill, and HB 3163, the check station bill, have been signed by the Governor. Both bills go into effect Jan. 1, 2022. As the legislative session winds down the consensus is that this virtual session was one of the most challenging ever. Here is the latest on some of the bills we are tracking.

HB 3152 Wildlife Inspection Points

This is an OHA bill. The bill gives ODFW authority to operate wildlife inspection points for purposes of preventing the spread of infections or infestations harmful to wildlife and to further wildlife management efforts.

Update: The bill has been signed by the Governor and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

HB 3163 Residency Requirements

This is an OHA bill. It makes a change in residency requirements for purposes of licenses, tags, and permits related to wildlife. Through discussions with law enforcement, it was discovered that prosecuting offenders with dual state residencies had become a concern of Oregon District Attorneys and they had become reluctant to prosecute wildlife offenders that fit into the dual state category. The new language in the bill changes the residency definition that a resident is a person who has physically resided in Oregon for not less than six consecutive months immediately prior to the date of making application for a license, tag or permit issued by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission. It further defines a resident as not someone who merely owns real property or pays property taxes in this state, or who has resident privileges in

another state or county for any purpose.

Update: The bill has been signed by the Governor and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

HB 2548 Wildlife Corridor Funding

Directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office to study issues related to funding construction of wildlife corridor road crossings and report to legislature its findings on or before Sept. 15, 2022.

Update: The bill had a work session in March in the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. A committee was formed and has met numerous times to discuss funding options for Wildlife Corridors. The committee will continue to meet during the interim.

HB 2728 Coyote Contests

The 2021 version has an amendment that protects certain aspects of nonprofit contests (Section 5 of the bill lines 17-19). The bill prohibits a person from conducting or participating in a contest, competition, tournament, or derby that has the objective of taking coyotes for cash or prizes. Provides that prohibition does not apply to raffles conducted by nonprofit organizations if the organization does not award raffle prizes based on number, weight or size of coyotes taken. Punishes violation of prohibition by maximum fine of \$2,000.

Update: The bill is dead, but may be introduced again in another form.

HB 2543 Firearm Transfer Prohibition

Prohibits transfer of firearms by gun dealers or private parties if OSP is unable to determine whether recipient is qualified to receive a firearm.

Update: OHA opposes this bill, which was passed out of committee and went to the House Committee on Rules. The bill was then referred back to committee.

Governor signs combined gun bill

The Governor has signed SB-554, which is a combined version of SB-544 and HB-2510 into one bill. The provisions in SB-544, which would have banned guns in state buildings and allowed local governments to pass their own bans, were curbed significantly. The amended bill would limit a new ban to the state Capitol, and only allow K-12 schools, community colleges and universities to enact bans. Local governments would not have that ability. Guns are already prohibited in most public buildings in Oregon, but an exemption exists for concealed handgun licenses (CHL). It is those permit holders that the new provisions would impact.

The penalty for a violation was reduced from a class C felony to a class A misdemeanor.

Fees also increase for new concealed handgun licenses and renewals.

The provisions of HB-2510, the so called "safe storage bill" which were amended into the combined bill, were also modified. The new amendments remove the "strict liability" standard for lawsuits that result from a stolen gun being used to cause injuries or deaths if the theft was not reported.

Minors' use of firearms is still regulated, with limited exemptions for hunting and target shooting.

Hunters should pay close attention to the provisions for safe transportation, transfers and use by minors. The implications are still subject to interpretation at this time. You can read it here: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB554/Enrolled>

To learn more about these bills, visit www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws

OHA helps reveal IP-13's extreme threats

By Amy Patrick, OHA Outreach Coordinator
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As a result of comments submitted by OHA and other hunting, farming, ranching, and food processing organizations, the Attorney General modified the draft ballot language for Initiative Petition 13.

While the extreme petition itself is unchanged, the revised ballot language does a better job of conveying to voters the far-reaching effects it would pose.

The new language specifies that the measure would criminalize, not simply prohibit, the killing of animals for food, including hunting, fishing, and trapping.

It further includes a more complete list of items that would now be criminalized, including wildlife management practices, control of pest/vermin, and reasonable handling and training techniques which were previously omitted.

Additionally, the ballot summary

notes that the elimination of hunting/fishing licenses would remove funding from ODFW's wildlife conservation efforts.

The ballot language has been certified by the Attorney General, but an appeal can be filed until July 6, 2021. If no appeal is filed at that time, the signature collection time begins for the petitioners; they must collect 112,020 signatures by June 2022 to place the measure on the November 2022 ballot.



Hart Mountain's bighorn herd is declining, and cougar predation has been identified as a primary cause. OHA has submitted comments asking USFWS to control cougar numbers.

OHA supports Hart Mountain habitat improvement, predator management

By Craig Foster, OHA Advisory Council Member,
 and Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator

The bighorn sheep population on the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge has substantially declined, and inventory data indicate that the mule deer population on the refuge has also declined considerably.

Continued bighorn decline could lead to either the extirpation of the population or trap them in a "predator pit" where low numbers remain, but the population cannot increase under the pressure of predation. Cougar predation is especially

impactful when bighorn sheep density is low and individual cougars become "bighorn sheep specialists."

Based on the observed data, both the USFWS and ODFW believe this is the case for the Hart Mountain bighorn sheep herd, and OHA supports that conclusion. OHA submitted comments to the USFWS and emphasized that implementation of the cougar control measures presented in the Draft Hart Mountain Bighorn Sheep Management Plan is the best management decision for reversing the current bighorn and mule deer population decline.

OHA eyes Klamath crossing

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
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OHA recently obtained information from local ODOT personnel that an ungulate crossing structure currently exists on privately owned lands on Highway 140 west of Doak Mountain. OHA staff confirmed this information and eagerly contacted ODFW and ODOT regarding the underpass and the possibility of utilizing the crossing for deer and elk in an effort to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. This 6-mile stretch of highway has been identified by ODOT as a priority area given the number of vehicle strikes on mule deer dating back to 2016. OHA, ODFW, ODOT and Mule Deer Foundation met at the site in mid-June, and the process to plan and map this fencing project to funnel wildlife under the highway has begun. OHA hopes to soon meet with the landowner and will provide assistance to agencies moving ahead.

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