

From the IDAHO SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ada County Fish & Game League ** Blackfoot River Bowmen ** Boise Valley Fly Fishermen ** Deer Hunters of Idaho ** Foundation for North American Wild Sheep ** Idaho Bird Hunters ** Idaho Falconers Association ** Idaho Houndmen's Association ** Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association ** Idaho Rifle & Pistol Association ** Idaho State Bowhunters ** Idaho Trappers Association ** Idaho Trout Unlimited Council ** Idaho Walleye Unlimited ** Idaho Wildlife Federation ** National Wild Turkey Federation ** Pheasants Forever ** Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation ** Safari Club International ** Snake River Cutthroats

TO: Honorable Representatives
FROM: Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council
Subject: Senate Bill: 1171

The Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council is opposed to Senate Bill 1171 for the following reasons:

- **Bad Science and Wasteful Spending** — The Department of Fish and Game (F&G) reported its findings from extensive research on predator control efforts on improving deer fawn survival to the Senate Resources and Conservation Committee. This work shows the very limited impact predator control (coyotes) has on fawn survival which entails great cost with limited effect. Some individuals and many hunters are laboring under the misconception that killing coyotes always and everywhere significantly helps deer populations. Just because a misconception is pervasive and popular does not justify its implementation at great cost and the waste of F&G funds. Game and predator control decisions must be based on science, not emotion and misconceptions.

- **Misguided Micro-Management** — This bill removes the flexibility currently assigned to the Fish and Game Commission and the F&G Dept by the sportsmen over these funds. They were appointed, empowered, and entrusted to know best what to do with the sportsmen's dollars because they are close to the details, have a better understanding of the science and best understand the needs of the wildlife. This bill locks up all of the unexpended balance of the expendable big game depredation fund and dictates its use, removing the flexibility to use these funds for a best use determined by the Department. These funds are sportsmen's dollars to be managed by the F&G as a politically independent agency for wildlife management.

- **Loss of Hunting as a Depredation Prevention Tool** — Senate Bill 1171 (section 6-47) removes the requirement that landowners who receive depredation funds must allow reasonable access to hunting. This means a landowner can deny hunting for the very depredating animals for which he is being paid damages from F&G depredation funds. Couple this with the current ability a landowner has to sell his Land Owner Appreciation Tags to anyone (the highest bidder) and there is the potential for this to become a situation where landowners are denying access to Idaho hunters who pay the depredation payments. Meanwhile the landowner grows more depredating animals and sells tags to rich hunters at thousands of dollars per tag for trophy deer and elk. The idea of access in return for depredation damages was reached by an Advisory Council composed of both hunters and farmers. Game animals belong to the people of Idaho, not the landowner on whose land the animals happen to reside.

- **Eliminates the \$1,000 deductible in non-contiguous years of depredation.** — Multi-year depredation events separated widely in time now require a \$1,000 deductible in the first year. This bill limits that deductible to once for all time.

