



23 February 2018

The Honourable Doug Donaldson
Minister of Lands, Forests, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
Government of B.C.
Box 9049 Stn. Provincial Government
Victoria BC, V8W 9E2

By e-mail: doug.donaldson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister Donaldson:

RE: COUGAR PURSUIT- ONLY SEASON IN THE OKANAGAN & THE
KOOTENAYS

I am writing on behalf of BC Nature, an organization comprising 53 naturalist clubs in B.C., with approximately 6300 members. Our motto is 'Know Nature and Keep it Worth Knowing'.

We recently learned that your Ministry had been requesting comments on the re-establishment of a cougar pursuit-only season in the Okanagan, from November 15 to March 31. As well, we have read that there is an existing cougar pursuit-only season in the Kootenays.

Such a season, in our view, allows and encourages the gratuitous mistreatment of wildlife. In fact, animal welfare organizations would label it as outright cruelty to animals. In particular we request that you provide the following information:

- What potential benefits other than exercise of their hunting hounds does it offer to hunters?
- How are these hounds exercised during the non-season?
- Are there benefits to the public at large?
- How does a supposed increase in the number of cougars warrant chasing them strictly for sport?

Aside from the cruelty aspects of these practices, what are the other ramifications of chasing cougars? If, as the procedure states, hunters are not to be armed, what would happen if the harassed cougar, cornered, were to attack the dogs? And, is there not the potential for hunters, if they are unarmed, to be the target of such a cougar retaliation?

Cougar kits stay with their mothers for up to two years. During that time, mothers teach their kits the elements of survival in the wild. If a mother cougar were to die or to be

injured as the unfortunate result of a "pursuit only" episode gone wrong, those kits would be left in a vulnerable position.

Cougars, lynx and bobcats play an important role in healthy ecosystems. Aside from that, they are creatures who deserve to live their lives without unnecessary disturbance from humans. When the B.C. Government announced the end of the grizzly hunt, we and other conservation groups hoped that at long last, our provincial government was taking a more humane approach to wildlife. This "pursuit-only" season says otherwise.

We respectfully ask that your Ministry halt the pursuit-only season for cougars and other cats (lynx and bobcats) in the Okanagan, the Kootenays, and wherever else this practice may be carried out.

I look forward to your response.

Yours truly,



Alan E. Burger, PhD
President: BC Nature
(Federation of BC Naturalists)

c.c. The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of the Government of BC
john.horgan.MLA@leg.bc.ca P.O. Box 9041 Stn. Provincial Government of BC
VICTORIA, B. C. V8W 9E1

c.c. Andrew Weaver, Leader of the Green Party - Andrew.weaver.MLA@leg.bc.ca

c.c. Tim Sheldon, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development, P.O. Box 9352 Stn. Provincial Government, VICTORIA, BC V8W 9M1 – sent via email to Assistant Dana Eckhardt

c.c. Andrew Wilkinson, Leader of the BC Liberal Party andrew.wilkinson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

c.c. Lesley Fox, The Fur Bearers Lesley@thefurbearers.com

c.c. Sarah Dubois, Chief Scientific Officer B. C. SPCA sdubois@sPCA.bc.ca

c.c. The Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, george.heyman.mla@leg.bc.ca