

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5068

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As of January 15, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to hunting cougar with the aid of dogs.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing hunting of cougar with the aid of dogs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Roach, Honeyford, Stevens, T. Sheldon, Swecker, Rossi and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation:

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

**Staff:** Ross Antipa (786-7413)

**Background:** Cougar hunting is regulated by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, which formerly had authorized cougar hunting with the aid of dogs. The passage of Initiative 655 prohibited cougar hunting with dogs when it was approved by a vote of the people in November 1996.

Since cougar hunting with dogs has been prohibited, hunters have harvested fewer cougar, cougar populations and range have expanded, and interaction with humans and livestock has increased.

Cougar hunting with dogs is the most efficient means of reducing cougar populations.

**Summary of Bill:** Public recreational hunting of cougar with the aid of dogs is authorized whenever the commission opens hunting seasons for cougar. Cougar movement into areas of the state with high human population density is prevented in order to ensure public safety.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.