

Nev. Legislature guts elk bill, then targets predators

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

There's an adage in politics that says if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

During Nevada's recent legislative session, that message applied to coyotes and mountain lions as much as it did to lobbyists, at least when it came to Assembly Bill 78.

The bill started life in late 2014 as a request from the Department of Wildlife to authorize the Wildlife Commission to increase by \$5 a fee that's applied to elk hunting tag applications.

Cash from the increase would have been used to beef up a state program that repays farmers and ranchers for damage elk sometimes inflict on private property.

By May 27 when Gov. Brian Sandoval signed it into law, however, the elk tag fee was long gone and replaced by a mandate to dedicate at least 80 percent of another fund to pay for lethal predator control. Revisions also called for reports from state wildlife officials to county-based wildlife advisory boards whenever the state officials act contrary to the advice of the county-level boards.

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