

MAY 27 2021



From the Desk of Representative
David Brock Smith

Support HB 3167B – Landowners Funding Predator Control!

Our coalition asks for your support of HB 3167B, which **removes the sunset on a 2015 program to help fund county predator management and makes minor clarifications to the program.** HB 3167B allows counties to continue to provide a voluntary funding solution to retain predator management services and protect local ag-dependent economies.

Many rural residents rely on effective predator management to prevent costly depredation on their livestock or timber. However, as payments in lieu of timber harvest continue to decrease, the future of current predator management programs in rural counties is tenuous. In 2015, the legislature created a program to provide a voluntary mechanism for agricultural and timber producers to help pay for *the county's share* of the existing federal USDA Wildlife Services program without imposing a tax on the general public. Since its authorization, two counties – Douglas County and Coos County - have approved local programs with great success, allowing landowners to assess themselves to fund critical predator control services.

The program authorized in 2015 gave livestock producers and timberland owners the ability to contribute to the funding of the county's trapping program and free up money to go to other county services—such as law enforcement or road improvements. The existing predator control district program:

- Allows over 50% of landowners/ producers to petition the county to form a separate funding district to pay for predator management in the district
- Creates an advisory board of producers to establish the boundaries of the district and set the rate of incurred charge annually
- Includes a voluntary opt-out if a landowner/ producer does not want to participate
- Provides alternative funding mechanism to fund county predator control services

The 2015 program sunsets this year. **HB 3167B removes the sunset clause to allow this successful program to continue and makes minor updates to the program, including ensuring that the resources can go to fund nonlethal management of predators.**

HB 3167B does not create a new predator control program or authorize anything new in regards to predator management. In forming a predator control district, landowners are simply assessing themselves to fund an existing, very long-standing and well-known predator control program. Inherent in that program is significant investment in non-lethal methods of wildlife control – USDA Wildlife Services always encourages non-lethal measures and helps farmers, ranchers, and timber landowners implement non-lethal measures that will reduce conflict as a significant part of their job.

Without effective predator control, our producers would experience significant losses of livestock (and their offspring) that they cannot absorb. Continuation of the predator control districts program is important to the successful continuation of production agriculture in many rural counties.,

Please Vote YES HB 3167B.