

Committee members,

I am a fifth generation sheep farmer in southern and eastern Douglas County. I am one of the 296 voluntarily enrolled members of the Predator Damage Control district in Douglas County. I have utilized the predator damage control services funded by my local District numerous times to protect the sheep that I depend on for my livelihood. I have sustained lower than average losses to my livestock because of it in my opinion. If the sunset for this program is not revoked I, and hundreds of other farmers and ranchers will lose a valuable tool to ensure the safety and health of our livestock. Predators not only kill animals outright, but also subject them to stress that can cause them to lose weight and be more susceptible to diseases that may take their life.

As wolves expand their range in Oregon it is also essential that these Predator Damage Control Districts remain viable as they provide funding for US Fish and Wildlife Services staff to confirm wolf kills of livestock. Without their official determination a livestock owner has minimal recourse for the loss of their animals to wolves.

I urge you to adopt HB 3167 and allow the predator damage control district program to continue to be a valuable method of funding services sorely needed by livestock owners.