

Submitter: Greg Haggard

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, and Water

Measure: HB4127

The State of Oregon will compensate cattle owners w/o verifiable information about how their cattle are lost, but you cannot fund a working system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities—a system that is falling into disarray. But let's concentrate on the Cattle owners and their ability to get public funds without hard evidence of predation. Yet another issue we have dropped the ball on amongst many, many others.

The program's "missing livestock" component is controversial and unverifiable: Cattle go missing for many reasons including negligence, theft, drought, wildfire, other predators and illness. There is no sideboards on payments for "missing" livestock — no proof of cattle put out versus brought in and no presence of wolves or known depredation in the area. Payment requests are for the full amount of the cattle. These are claims that are not transparent, hard to verify and has been part of many investigative journalism including by OPB and High Country News. Back-filling the program for this biennium means making up for the missing livestock claims. And these claims are disproportionately higher than confirmed depredation. For context, cattle being the main livestock in Oregon, in 2021 confirmed and probable wolf depredation and injuries accounted for 50 cattle. In comparison, 679 missing livestock claims have been made, mostly based on anecdotal information.

2. The program already received additional \$400,000 for 2021-2023 biennium: The money has only started to roll out of ODA. We cannot determine the sufficiency and the usage of this additional sum of money till the end of the biennium.

3. The program is in need of reform: The Fund was established in 2011 and to this date, it

has not been revisited or revised. We had very few wolves in 2-3 counties in 2011 and

wolves were a protected species. We have wolves in 12 counties now and they are no

longer protected. Poaching is rampant (9 wolves poached within the last year). While

compensation pays for depredation and even missing livestock, wolves are also killed as a response to the same depredations by ODFW. This is not promoting co-existence or building tolerance. Many producers agree that the program is dire need of reform. Their voices need to be heard as well. Throwing money at a problem will not make it go away.