

## Background on HB 4127

HB 4127 will allocate \$1 million of general fund dollars for the remainder of this biennium to the Wolf Compensation and Financial Assistance Program that is administered by Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

The program was established in 2011 to support landowners and build tolerance for the wolves when they were protected under federal and state Endangered Species Act. The program provides compensation for direct loss (confirmed and probable depredation by wolves), non-lethal tools (at least 30% of the total funds) and missing livestock, in the listed order of priority. The program receives \$100,000 every biennium from the state and the funds used for non-lethals is matched by federal dollars.

## Why we oppose HB 4127

1. ***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.

## Contacts:

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