



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Opposition to HB 4127
Presented to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water
By Haley Stewart, Program Manager, Wildlife Protection
The Humane Society of the United States**

February 7, 2022

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee, my name is Haley Stewart. I live in Beaverton, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our supporters in Oregon. HB 4127 is fiscally irresponsible. The Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund does not need more taxpayer money, but instead needs to responsibly use the funds it already has in a more transparent and accountable way. We urge you to vote no on this bill.

Each year in Oregon, many more requests are made for compensation for missing livestock than for confirmed or probable losses. Livestock go missing for many reasons—in fact, federal data show that Oregon livestock producers lose 7 times more cattle and sheep to causes like harsh weather, theft, and disease than to all predators combined, including wolves. Yet under the current program, it is easy to scapegoat wolves and get paid for it at the expense of taxpayers.

Claims made for missing livestock are unverifiable and payments provide an incentive for dishonesty and neglectful behavior. Oregon Public Broadcasting and High County News have both investigated suspicious and questionable payments made for missing livestock, demonstrating the deep problems with the current compensation scheme.

Allocating an additional \$1 million to a program that is so easily abused is a misuse of taxpayer dollars. Instead, this program should be reformed to increase transparency and accountability, while also reflecting changes in Oregon's wolf population and state and federal law. There is no reason to give more money to a broken program, especially when the program already received an additional \$400,000 for this biennium. Please vote no on HB 4127. Thank you.