

Dear Elected —

Please oppose HB 4127, a bill to allocate \$1 million of general fund dollars to the Wolf Compensation and Financial Assistance Program (Compensation Program) for the remainder of this biennium. Many reasons exist for not increasing the fund further:

The wolf compensation fund was designed to build tolerance for wolves and promote coexistence when wolf killing was prohibited by state and federal Endangered Species Act protections. Those protections are no longer in place, and livestock producers have several avenues for accessing proven non-lethal coexistence tools and, if absolutely necessary, seeking lethal removal of wolves. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is authorized to kill wolves at the request of livestock producers at the expense of the taxpayer, not the producer. We already spend too much of tax payers money subsidizing the livestock industry.

HB 4127 would allow for payments not just for proven wolf depredations, but for missing animals without any proof that wolves are responsible. This opens the door and promotes dishonesty. No other state allows for such payment – for good reason: livestock go missing for many reasons, including the much more common incidents of bad weather, disease and poor ranching. The bill would create a perverse incentive for producers to not make every effort to bring their livestock off the range since they could apply for compensation for lost animals. The subsidized grazing we allow on public lands has had a very negative impact on the land itself.

The fund is already bloated and vulnerable to abuse. In 2021 alone an order of magnitude more claims were made on the fund than were deemed actual or likely wolf predations by ODFW, demonstrating how prone to abuse the current program is. Moreover, the legislature allocated \$400,000 to the fund less than a year ago, funds that have yet to be dispersed, obviating any argument that additional funds are needed.

Thank you for your attention, please oppose HB 4127.

Sincerely,

John Morrow