

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girad, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

In addition to my previously submitted testimony, this submission is in response to testimony submitted by the Oregon Wildlife Coalition. I hope to provide additional context for the importance of SB 471, which I support.

1. The “missing livestock” wording may seem confusing to those who are not livestock producers on working lands. Many livestock producers have been stewarding lands and livestock for decades, and their families before them have for generations. Livestock producers keep detailed and thorough records including calving dates and numbers, turn out dates, movement between pastures and allotments, and number of cattle turned out. A livestock producer’s repeated observations on the land need to be considered important data, just like a scientist’s repeated observations are. A livestock producer knows how many calves or cattle they may lose to respiratory disease while turned out. When the average loss on turn out over 30 years is 1%, and after the recolonization of wolves in the area the loss becomes 15%, that is a number that must be recognized. In Northeast Oregon, a landscape that is saturated with wolves, it would not be expected to find a carcass after a wolf pack kills a calf, even when a producer is going through their cattle every day or so. Many of the packs are estimated to have more than 7 adult wolves in addition to subadults, so a person could imagine that there would not be much left of a cow or calf after a pack feeds on it.
2. As it currently stands, the wolf compensation program provides funding to assist producers in nonlethal conflict prevention techniques including range riding, fencing and carcass management practices in addition to compensation for direct losses (confirmed depredations). It does not begin to compensate producers for stress-related production losses, including decreases in body condition of cows and calves, increased illnesses and decreased pregnancy rates in cattle. It is well-documented that sharing a landscape with wolves causes stress-related production losses in cattle. In their 2013 paper, Steele et al. determined that, in order to adequately capture the magnitude of these losses, the payment ratio would need to be between 18:1 and 24:1.
3. Producer-implemented nonlethal conflict prevention methods are widely adopted by livestock producers and supported by environmental groups as effective and an important part of wolf conservation. The funds being requested through SB 471 go directly to producers through county committees to offset the additional costs of time and resources that it takes to effectively implement these tools. Ranchers need financial assistance to help manage the risks associated with sharing landscapes with wolves, and compensation for losses to predation is a reasonable and important form of public support for policies that expand the ranges of widely valued wildlife such as wolves. If ranches cannot remain economically viable and give in to the pressure to sell out for real estate development, wildlife will pay the ultimate price. As I stated in my previous testimony, wildlife experts, including David Mech, renowned wolf conservationist and founder of the International Wolf Center, agree that the biggest threat to grey wolf recovery is habitat loss.

4. It's incorrect to state that "The program is not building social tolerance for wolves." That has not been studied in Oregon, and many things have changed over the last 12 years, including the extensive growth and dispersal of the wolf population in Oregon.
5. For these reasons, I support additional funds to appropriately compensate producers affected by the rapidly growing and dispersing wolf population in Oregon. Even with implementation of proven nonlethal conflict prevention tools, depredations will continue to occur, especially as wolf populations continue to recover.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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Steele, J.R., Rashford, B.S., Foulke, T.K., Tamnaka, J.A., & Taylor, D.T. (2013). Wolf (*Canis lupus*) predation impacts on livestock production: direct effects, indirect effects, and implications for compensation ratios. *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, 66(5), 539-544.