

BIRKMAIER RANCH, INC.

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To whom this may concern,

My name is Tom Birkmaier, I am a rancher in Wallowa County, located in the northeast corner of Oregon. I am opposed to Oregon Senate Bill 886 for the following reason:

Wallowa County is home to eight of the twenty wolf packs that reside in Oregon. As a livestock producer, I have suffered substantial losses from wolf depredation both on my Forest Service Allotments and on private lands all of which are located in the Chesnimnus area. I believe strongly in the use of non-lethal methods to reduce incidences of wolf/cattle conflicts. For example, I have used just about all of the typical methods such as fladry, radios, critter-getters, range-riders, coordinating with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and have personally spend over a thousand hours on the rangelands to reduce the conflict. Beyond traditional methods, I have also worked with Defenders of Wildlife in the past, and this year have a grant through Western Landowner's Alliance to continue the non-lethal efforts.

One lesson that I have learned through all of these efforts over the years is that it is imperative to know the locations of the den and rendezvous sites as well as have collar information available. In past years, this information has provided ranchers with invaluable information necessary to reduce conflict. For me personally, it has allowed me to know the locations were I need to focus non-lethal efforts, including but not limited to livestock moves, increased presence within the pastures in close proximity to the wolf sites, and increase non-lethal noise makers. Without this information, the reduction in conflict would be nearly impossible, setting up a lose-lose situation for both the livestock and the wolf.

On a further note, the years of highest success at reducing conflict have included open communication between livestock producers and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. This open communication has help to build trust between the agency and the rancher, something that is lacking across much of the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

/s/ Tom Birkmaier

Tom Birkmaier

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