



March 23, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in opposition of HB 2631 – Relating to the effects of wolves on livestock

Dear Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our members and supporters in Oregon, I am writing in opposition to HB 2631, which proposes a compensation multiplier of seven times fair market value for livestock or working dogs who are confirmed or deemed probably killed or injured by wolves. This multiplier would drain the limited resources available for this program and could make the proper and robust use of effective, non-lethal conflict prevention measures less financially available and viable for livestock producers.

Livestock go missing for many reasons, including severe weather and disease, especially in rugged terrain.¹ Indeed, livestock-wolf conflicts are rare in Oregon and in every jurisdiction where they live.² For example, in 2021, wolves were confirmed to have killed or injured fewer than 0.007% of the cattle, sheep and goats living in Oregon.³ Assigning missing livestock as losses caused by wolves without evidence only increases animosity toward wolves. Additionally, active and consistent monitoring of herds is considered best practice in areas of wolf activity.⁴ We would support the removal of the missing livestock component of the program in this bill.

Non-lethal, proactive range management and husbandry techniques, such as low-stress livestock handling, range riding, carcass removal, and others, can be very effective and economically advantageous in the long term when used adaptively and consistently, saving the lives of both livestock animals and Oregon's recovering wolf population.⁵ Financially assisting livestock producers with the implementation of these tools should be the focus of the limited resources for this program, rather than greatly multiplying the fair market value of injured or lost livestock.

For these same reasons, we also oppose the -1 and -3 amendments, which would implement a five-times multiplier of fair market value. We request that more time be taken for stakeholders to come to an agreement, and we urge the Committee not to move HB 2631 forward.

Thank you,

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¹ The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that wolves have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries," https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/HSUS-Wolf-Livestock-6.Mar_.19Final.pdf (2019); Peter Kareiva et al., "A new era of wolf management demands better data and a more inclusive process," *Conservation Science and Practice* n/a, no. n/a (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.12821>, <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/csp2.12821>.

² Ibid.

³ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2022). Oregon wolf conservation and management 2021 annual report. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Salem, OR. https://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/oregon_wolf_program/2021_Annual_Wolf_Report_FINAL.pdf; U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Northwest Regional Field Office. (2022). Oregon Department of Agriculture: Oregon agricultural statistics & directory 2022. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Oregon/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/2022/ODA_AgStatsDirectory.pdf.

⁴ Andelt, W. F. (1996). Carnivores. In P. R. Krausman (Ed.), *Rangeland Wildlife* (pp. 133-155). Society for Range Management; Bergstrom, B. J. (2017). Carnivore conservation: shifting the paradigm from control to coexistence. *Journal of Mammalogy*, 98(1), 1-6; Eklund, A., López-Bao, J. V., Tourani, M., Chapron, G., & Frank, J. (2017). Limited evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce livestock predation by large carnivores. *Scientific reports*, 7(1), 2097; Lennox, R. J., Gallagher, A. J., Ritchie, E. G., & Cooke, S. J. (2018). Evaluating the efficacy of predator removal in a conflict-prone world. *Biological Conservation*, 224, 277-289; Parks, M., & Messmer, T. (2016). Participant perceptions of Range Rider Programs operating to mitigate wolf-livestock conflicts in the western United States. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 40(3), 514-524; Santiago-Avila, F. J., Cornman, A. M., & Treves, A. (2018). Killing wolves to prevent predation on livestock may protect one farm but harm neighbors. *PLoS One*, 13(1), e0189729; Stone, S. A., Breck, S. W., Timberlake, J., Haswell, P. M., Najera, F., Bean, B. S., & Thornhill, D. J. (2017). Adaptive use of nonlethal strategies for minimizing wolf-sheep conflict in Idaho. *Journal of Mammalogy*, 98(1), 33-44; Treves, A., & Karanth, K. U. (2003). Human-carnivore conflict and perspectives on carnivore management worldwide. *Conservation biology*, 17(6), 1491-1499; Treves, A., Kropfel, M., & McManus, J. (2016). Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 14(7), 380-388.

⁵ E.g., Louchouart, N. X., & Treves, A. (2023). Low-stress livestock handling protects cattle in a five-predator habitat. *PeerJ*, 11, e14788.