



Oregon Sheep Growers Association

March 28, 2023

To: Representative Ken Helm, Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

Re: Support for HB 2631

The Oregon Sheep Growers Association fully supports HB 2631 which will help strengthen Oregon's Wolf Management compensation program. The key to the success of Oregon's Wolf plan is to ensure the participation of Oregon livestock producers. The proposed increase in the compensation ratios would be a step toward adequately covering the indirect expenses associated with increased confrontations between livestock and wolves. Confrontations with wolves create losses in in livestock weights and declining reproductive rates. These costs are more difficult to estimate than the cost of a lost sheep or calf.

The percentage of the Wolf Management compensation funds allocated to direct compensation is approximately 12 percent of the total. Livestock producers are investing heavily in the cost of hiring and equipping additional herders or range riders, as well as purchasing more equipment, lighting, and additional guard animals. However, the amount of funding provided for deterrence measures is far from fully compensated. Livestock producers are bearing the brunt of the cost of the Wolf Management Plan.

One Umatilla County sheep producer invested more than \$30,000 over the course of a year to add and equip an additional herder after experiencing 13 confirmed kills in one year. Confirmed kills were reduced to 3 the following year, however, the producer was only able to recoup approximately \$11,000 of these expenses from the Wolf Management Compensation fund. In addition, this does not include any accounting for the indirect losses experienced by the producer.

HB 2631 would establish a directive for the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust fund to provide grants to assist counties with programs that would provide compensation to producers who "suffer probably or confirmed loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation" and for those producers who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques."

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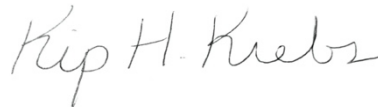
The proposal contained in HB 2631 provides that the compensation provided would be based on a multiplier of not more than seven times the fair market value of the livestock or working dogs. This increase will bring Oregon to a comparable level of similar programs in other states.

Wolves are a public resource and livestock producers agreed to support the establishment of Oregon's wolf population, but as the number of wolves increase and the associated costs increase, the state's responsibility to compensate the livestock industry should likewise be increased.

Predator control has long been a serious problem for sheep producers. The growing number of wolves in Oregon and the increasing number of confrontations between livestock and wolves make passage of HB 2631 and the increased allocation to the Wolf Management Compensation program vitally important for Oregon's sheep industry.

On behalf of OSGA, I strongly encourage you to support HB 2631.

Sincerely,



Kip Krebs
OSGA President