

SB 777 -1, -5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

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Meeting Dates: 2/27, 3/11, 3/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies the Wolf Depredation Compensation Program by limiting it to individuals who suffer probable and confirmed losses or injury of livestock or working dogs, capping compensation at \$25,000 per animal, and establishing certain compensation rates based on specified multipliers applied to fair market value.

Fiscal impact: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

Detailed Summary:

Defines "area of known wolf activity" as any region identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife where wolf activity has been observed. Modifies the Wolf Depredation Compensation Program by removing compensation for missing livestock and limiting it to individuals who suffer probable and confirmed losses or injuries to livestock or working dogs caused by wolves. Modifies compensation rates by establishing a maximum compensation cap of \$25,000 per animal, as well as the following multipliers:

- A multiplier of seven times the fair market value of cow calves and yearlings, sheep and goats.
- A multiplier of three times the fair market value of cows.
- The fair market value of horses, other livestock, and working dogs.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Establishment of the Wolf Depredation Compensation Program in 2011 (HB 3560)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) wolf management and challenges
- ODFW probable or confirmed loss determination
- Lethal take
- Non-lethal activities and mitigation efforts by ranchers
- Effectiveness of nonlethal deterrence
- Justification for maximum compensation of \$25,000 per animal
- Establishing fair market value for livestock
- Current market values of cows and calves
- Reduction of ranch revenue
- Effects of stress on herds
- Multipliers in Wyoming and Colorado
- Changing percentage of grant allocations within the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program
- Missing livestock category
- Total value of cattle, sheep, goats, and other livestock
- Investigation, confirmation, and compensation processes
- County Wolf Depredation Committees
- Current program deficiencies
- Good faith conversations with stakeholders
- Conservation groups' involvement
- Anti-poaching funds
- Canadian, Wyoming, and Oregon wolf size and behavior comparisons

- Moose population
- Increased pack sizes

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 amendment increases the required minimum proportion of allocated grant program funds to be used by counties for financial assistance provided to persons who implement livestock management or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock from 30% to 50%. The amendment decreases the multiplier for cow calves and yearlings, sheep and goats from seven to five times the fair market value and increases the multiplier for cows from three to five times their fair market value.

-5 amendment increases the required minimum proportion of allocated grant program funds to be used by counties for financial assistance provided to persons who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock from 30% to 50%. The amendment **allows counties to determine the multiplier** applied to compensation rates subject to the following caps:

- A multiplier of five times the fair market value of cow calves and yearlings, sheep and goats.
- A multiplier of three times the fair market value of cows.
- The fair market value of horses, other livestock, and working dogs
- Not exceeding \$25,000 total

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) designates an area of known wolf activity based on where an individual or groups of wolves have been documented repeatedly over a period of time, using actual location and data points to establish resident wolf activity. In 2023 ODFW reported 178 recorded wolves in Oregon. Currently, ODFW investigates loss or injury of livestock that is thought to be caused by wolves. Determination categories for loss or injury include Confirmed, Probable, Unknown and Not Wolf.

House Bill 3560 (passed 2011) directed the Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program, using moneys in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund to provide grants for counties to implement wolf depredation compensation programs.