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**Lakeview Soil and Water Conservation District**  
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Date: February 10, 2025

Testimony of Brandi St. Clair, Project Manager/Wildlife Biologist for Lakeview SWCD

SB 777: Relating to the depredation of livestock.

Dear Chair Golden, Co-Chair Nash and Committee Members:

I am the 7<sup>th</sup> generation of my family to reside in Lake County and enjoy its resources, hunting/fishing opportunities, vast and open landscapes to recreate in as well as raising our children in a small community with traditional values and deep appreciation and respect for the ranching community across Lake County. I have served as a Wildlife Biologist for ~20 years in Lake County where I have grown up alongside, worked with and for many of its generational landowners and ranching families. During my career I have worked for and partnered with multiple agencies, including Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, to restore, enhance and conserve wildlife habitat while also improving rangeland conditions for livestock grazing and sustainable ranching. Lakeview Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), my employer for the last 10 years, has a mission to provide technical assistance to individuals, groups, and other agencies for the purpose of managing and enhancing our natural resources, environment, and economy with a vision to conserve and develop Lake County's soil, water and related resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the people. We are the supporters and representation of Lake County's private landowners.

Lakeview SWCD supports SB 777 Relating to the depredation of livestock. Ranchers in Lake County have been burdened with more than the direct costs of livestock losses as a result of wolves. Engaging in wolf-livestock conflict reduction takes additional producer labor, time, and infrastructure. Given that wildlife is a public resource and the American public, as a whole, values the presence of diverse wildlife across the West, including large carnivores, funding sources for compensation should reflect the fact that these species are a public resource. Landowners face costs associated with production losses, and in addition, landowners bear hidden costs to manage resources and time needed to engage in conflict reduction and provide habitat for wildlife.

Compensation for production losses, as well as time to implement wildlife conflict reduction and steward quality habitat, is needed to support biodiversity on working landscapes and their economic viability. A 7:1 compensation rate for livestock killed by wolves in Oregon would provide the necessary support for ranchers to continue to operate while helping to sustain our state's diverse ecosystems. Federal funding for compensation should reflect the extent and geographic scope of public support for wildlife conservation and recognize the value of private lands in maintaining biodiversity. Lakeview SWCD supports expanding federal, state, and private funding sources to supplement existing state efforts to support compensation for depredations and distribute the costs of providing habitat for wildlife and helping to sustain generational ranching in Oregon.

*Brandi St. Clair*

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Signed

02/10/2025

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Date