

Submitter: Theresa Taylor
On Behalf Of: Taylor Ranch Inc
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

We are the owners of Taylor Ranch Inc. a 4th generation cow calf operation in Plush Oregon consisting of ourselves and our son and daughter-in-law. Our sole income is derived from our operation. We would like to urge you to vote in favor of SB 0777 to increase wolf depredation compensation from the fair market value ratio of 1:1 to the proposed increase of 7:1, following Colorado's lead.

Our operation is actively involved in conservation efforts aimed at wildlife habitat on our private holdings. We were the first landowners on Honey Creek to install fish screens, we have had extensive juniper cuts, we combat the invasion of annual grasses; all to improve the habitat, not just for our cattle, but for the wildlife that coexists on our range with our cattle. We have partnered with USFW, ODFW, Lake County Weed Board, Lake County SWCD, USFS and BLM on many wildlife conservation projects. The presence of wolves in the west is something that the public values, but unlike the antelope, mule deer, sage grouse, Warner suckers and other wildlife that we manage our habitat for, wolves incur a disproportionately high cost to the ranches where they roam. John has been a member of the Lake County Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee since its inception. In that time, he has spent thousands of dollars in time, attention, and travel to serve in this capacity. While we have not yet suffered wolf depredation losses on our operation it is a matter of time before we do as there have been recent confirmed wolf kills of cattle within 20 miles of our operation.

To be sustainable we must be profitable, and the expenses we have incurred so far are probably just the tip of the iceberg. The costs associated with losing cattle to wolf depredation are far more reaching than the fair market value of the individual animal. When sharing habitat with wolves, it is not just the animals that are killed that financially impact the rancher. Weaning and conception rates are known to go down when wolves are in the same area as cattle. Costs of engaging in conflict reduction between wolves and cattle are a significant expense for ranchers. When wolves are actively killing cattle, it is hard to always provide solid proof of every instance of predation, there can be lack of evidence on the carcass whether it has been fully consumed or only partially. So, for every fatality that can be confirmed as wolf predation there can be others that cannot be proven, but still effect our ability to be profitable and stay in business. Replacing cattle lost to predation is not as simple as just buying another animal. Our operation bought 10 females in the 1930s and our herd has come entirely from those 10 head. Their genetics have adapted over 90+ years to our environment, those genetics are hard to put a price on. We respectfully ask that you approve SB 0777 to more fairly compensate those of us who are bearing the brunt of the expenses that comes from having wolves on the landscape.

Sincerely,
John & Theresa Taylor
Taylor Ranch, Inc.