



February 13, 2025

Re: Testimony on SB 777

Chairman Golden, Co-Chair Nash and Senate committee members:

My name is Michael Dotson, and I have the privilege to serve as director of the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center, based in Jackson County. Since 2011 KS Wild has been a founding and active member of the Pacific Wolf Coalition – a group of organizations focused on wolf recovery and coexistence up and down the three Pacific Coast states. For the past decade and a half, KS Wild has worked to support wildlife co-existence measures with rural landowners and farmers in our community. KS Wild supporters include dozens of food producers, family farmers, and livestock operators in places like the Applegate Valley and other rural areas of Jackson and Josephine Counties.

In 2018-2019, my colleagues and I at KS Wild helped raised more than \$6,000 through a crowdfunding campaign to [support the construction of a wolf-deterrent fence](#) on a 245-acre farm in rural Jackson County that had been experiencing depredations of livestock and guardian dogs. I highlight this project as one where ranchers and the conservation community came together to support co-existence. Even as a conservation and wildlife advocate, I recognize the extra effort farms and ranches have to take to responsibly manage their operations in wolf, cougar, and black bear territory.

As written and introduced, KS Wild does not support SB 777. Last year, KS Wild opposed a similar Oregon House bill that died in committee. We are concerned that legislators tasked with working with the ag community between last year's and this year's session did not negotiate in good faith, and we still don't believe this bill moves the needle for improving co-existence with wolves. The bill does not address inefficiencies with the Wolf Predation Loss Compensation Program or improve ways to account for increased management burdens and promote wolf recovery.

At a time when Oregonians and the Legislature are being asked to tighten our belts due to shifting funds, this bill benefits only a small number of Oregonians who are already eligible for market-rate compensation of lost or missing livestock. A 7x multiplier would drain the current program and leave Oregonians to pay an exorbitant amount to just a small handful of operators that would have little accountability to using non-lethal measures at their farms. Parties should reengage in conversation to explore ways to improve the Wolf Depredation Loss Compensation Program.

For the Wild,

Michael Dotson, Executive Director, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center