

Submitter: Cassandra Sullivan-Kaseberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

I submit this testimony in opposition to SB777.

As a rancher in Eastern Oregon, I can appreciate the idea behind this bill and its intention, but unfortunately it is nothing more than a band aid on an arterial bleed. This bill does nothing to address the bigger problem that livestock owners face here in Oregon. Wolf Management. We continue to go down a path of least resistance and instead of fighting for our rights and trying to accomplish something to actually manage wolves, we watch the legislature throw money at the problem. While I'm all for funding for losses and non-lethal options, pretending that compensating at a higher rate somehow fixes the issue is short-sighted.

This rate increase will not encourage more livestock producers to participate, it doesn't cover the actual time and money we put into these animals. It's mostly just a gesture. I would much rather have my years-long investment in genetics, feed, and hard work that we put into each animal still standing in my pasture, rather than a check because there was a wolf attack. It also doesn't cover the non-tangible losses, such as reduced conception rates, lower rates of gain, poor pasture utilization, etc. The only way to truly see a difference is to hold the states feet to the fire and get actual wolf management and to keep the politics out of it. We have a wolf plan in place already that really isn't too bad, but no one wants to follow it.

Bills such as this only fuel the rhetoric that ranchers and individuals don't care for their livestock and are only looking for a payout. It fuels environmental groups to push back on the state and ODFW to not deal with the real problems when it comes to wolf management.

Funding for the non-lethal portion is important; I will not argue that. I know personally many producers who have implemented many non-lethal measures and received some compensation for their efforts. However, the efficacy of these measures was marginal. The other issue is the abuse that has already occurred by certain producers for the non-lethal funds is already abundant. There are bad eggs out there exploiting the program, plain and simple. This also turns a lot of people away from the program because they simply don't want to be associated with it.

Stop throwing money at a problem that can't be paid off. Figure out a way to negotiate at the table to get better wolf management in the state of Oregon.