

Submitter: Tom Doman
On Behalf Of: White Sage Land and Cattle
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 777 on behalf of Oregon's ranching families, particularly those in Harney County, where wolf depredation continues to cause significant financial and emotional strain. As a lifelong rancher, I have seen firsthand how the current compensation system falls short of addressing the real costs that ranchers face due to wolf attacks.

Harney County encompasses vast, rugged terrain where ranchers manage cattle across large landscapes, making it extremely difficult to locate every animal lost to wolves. The current system only compensates for confirmed and probable depredations, yet research indicates that for every carcass found, multiple other animals are lost and never recovered. Despite this, compensation for missing livestock has been inconsistent, undervalued, or nonexistent, leaving ranchers to bear the burden of these losses on their own.

Beyond the direct loss of animals, wolf activity also causes substantial financial strain due to:

- Lighter weaning weights, reducing calf value at sale.
- Lower pregnancy rates and delayed breeding, impacting herd productivity.
- Poorer cow body condition, which affects overall herd health and resilience.
- Higher management costs, including labor-intensive non-lethal deterrents, increased monitoring, and added stress on both cattle and ranchers.

These challenges make it increasingly difficult for ranchers to remain financially viable. Many have opted out of the current compensation program because the requirements are too costly and time-consuming, the investigation process is not always trusted, and missing livestock are not fairly valued.

SB 777 presents a much-needed improvement by removing the ineffective missing livestock payment structure and instead implementing a multiplier payment for confirmed and probable wolf kills. This would provide a more realistic and fair method of compensation that better reflects the true impact of wolf depredation on Oregon's livestock producers.

The cattle industry is a vital part of Oregon's economy, contributing over \$1 billion annually. It is crucial that policymakers recognize the challenges ranchers face and take steps to ensure they are fairly compensated for their losses. I urge you to support SB 777 to help ranchers manage the real costs of wolf depredation and keep

their operations sustainable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tom Doman