

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and members of the committee:

My name is Ellie Gage. I work for Western Landowners Alliance as the Oregon Resource Coordinator, and I support SB 0777.

In my position with Western Landowners Alliance, I have had the opportunity to work directly with livestock producers, wildlife management agencies, and other NGOs on the issue of wolf-livestock conflict. My work includes supporting ranchers in remaining economically viable, sharing technical resources, providing peer-to-peer learning opportunities for producers, and sharing producers' experiences with wolf-livestock conflict to increase public support and understanding of what they are experiencing.

We at Western Landowners Alliance believe that most Oregonians want wolves in our state, but the cost of living with them is disproportionately felt by a few. Wolf-livestock conflict comes with a huge cost to those who are affected: a cost that is difficult to quantify but includes stress-related production loss in livestock, killed and injured animals, and the cost in time and resources to implement non-lethal conflict reduction tools. We believe that compensating livestock producers by addressing those costs is society's role and responsibility in supporting wolves on the landscape. Wildlife are a public resource that depends on private land, and the cost of providing critical habitat needs to be shared and reflect the extent of public support for conservation. We believe that compensation for loss to wolves would be widely supported by Oregonians.

At WLA, we recognize the good things happening on privately owned and managed working lands: the wildlife that count on those lands for habitat, movement and migration; the food and fiber that are produced; and the rural economies that are supported. What we consistently hear from producers and conflict reduction experts is the importance of all 4 of the 4Cs of Conflict Reduction: Conflict prevention, Compensation, lethal Control, and Collaboration. The 4Cs is a systems-based approach to reducing conflict with wildlife on working lands, and adequate compensation is an important part of the success of the system. We don't consider compensation to be a controversial issue: providing adequate compensation to the people who are disproportionately affected by the presence of wolves is the right thing to do. We understand that while producers must be profitable to be sustainable, their drive to work in ranching is rooted in a love for rural communities, caring for livestock, wildlife, and the land they steward.

Colorado is a state with urban-rural dynamics similar to Oregon, and both Colorado and Wyoming provide a 7:1 compensation ratio for confirmed depredations with broad consensus across party lines from diverse stakeholders including wildlife commissioners, state legislators, producers, and wildlife advocates. There is widely supported consensus in Colorado that a compensation ratio is critical and impactful, and we believe a similar compensation program is the best path forward in Oregon as well.

Producers who are affected by the presence of wolves on the landscape have clearly asked for public support in living with the public resource that is wolves. Appropriately compensating

livestock producers for wolf-related losses is a solution coming from the radical center, where wildlife and working lands both have a future in the west. I recommend that you report the bill out of committee with a recommendation to the body to pass the bill.