

Subject: Testimony Regarding SB 777 – Wolf Compensation

To the Honorable Members of the Natural Resources and Wildfire, Oregon State Legislation:

My name is Susan Bunch, I am involved in both the cattle and beef industries as part of a family ranch in Baker County. **I am writing to respectfully submit my testimony for support of Senate Bill 777 – Wolf Compensation.**

I am part of the 5th generation at our ranch. The 6th generation is now engaged with us running the ranch. Our hope is to continue this operation with the 7th generation. Our ranch has been in our family for over 100 years and registered in the state of Oregon as a Century Ranch. As ranchers in Eastern Oregon, we have lived with wolves for 20+ years. For the following reasons, I urge your committee to support our livelihood and industry.

Science says 1 carcass in 8 are found in our rugged terrain when depredation occurs. Many times, there is not a carcass as a wolf will eat the whole animal including hide and bones leaving nothing to be found. When a carcass is not found, a wolf kill cannot be confirmed, and the rancher is not compensated. This is why the multiplier of 7 to 1 has been put in the bill. This eliminates compensation for missing livestock in return for payment on confirmed and probable wolf kills. Compensation would only be paid out for the loss of the confirmed kill. Hence our ask of 7 to 1.

I would also like to address wolves' harassment of cattle as a sport: We have had wolves injure and maim animals. Wolves will tear an animal up but not kill them. We have had wolves injure multiple head of cattle at a time. We spend numerous hours and dollars treating these animals. Sometimes the only humane thing to do is euthanize the injured animal. Wolf harassment of livestock results in reduced weaning weights in calves, reduced conception rate or delayed breeding (less cows pregnant) and reduced body condition of cows (cows are thin going into the winter months). We have also incurred the cost of implementing non-lethal measures and dealing with cattle becoming increasingly hard to manage. These losses are not just economic, they are also emotional and social. While trying to protect our herds we lose family time as well as needing to put everyday normal ranching activities on the back burners while we deal with wolf issues.

Oregon ranchers are prohibited from eliminating wolves; however, these losses add up, making it, in some instances, financially unsustainable to continue operating. In addition, many ranchers do not participate in the compensation program. This decision not to participate stems from distrust in the investigative process, the high cost of compliance, and the inadequate compensation for missing animals. SB 777 offers a practical solution by eliminating the flawed missing livestock compensation process and implementing a multiplier payment system for confirmed and probable wolf kills. This approach ensures that ranchers receive fair compensation for the economic damage caused by wolves.

Ranchers in Oregon contribute over \$1Billion annually to the state's economy. Not only food, but 99% of the animal is utilized when harvested. The list of beef by-products used in everyday life is

huge. I would encourage you as a policy maker to stand with us and support our industry. To remain sustainable and continue to provide for people it is essential for us to remain in business.

In closing, I want to thank you for your time and consideration in support of SB 777 – Wolf Compensation

Sincerely,
Susan K. Bunch

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