

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash and Members of the Committee,

I am a rancher in NE Oregon with my husband Dan Warnock. We have had our share of livestock killed by wolves and have spent numerous hours checking cows when wolves are in the area. When our cows have been harassed by wolves we cannot use our cow dogs to move cattle. In these Imnaha canyon land, our dogs are our greatest tool for moving livestock. When we cannot use them it takes more time to get from one pasture to another.

I also administer the local Wolf Compensation Program. With this bill we will be eliminating missing livestock. This payment is the most controversial of them all. The committee has to decide if the number of missing is a reality. The state form is not helpful at all because there is not enough information on it. Last year we had a producer claim they lost 60 calves. The form does not ask for the total number of calves and the normal loss percentage. So was it 60 out of 100 calves or 1000? This year I sent producer the Wallowa County Missing Application so more information could be given to the committee to make a decision. This missing livestock payment is very seldom payment of 100%. One year we did not receive any funding for it. In 2023, Wallowa County received 50% of what was asked for so currently there is not a reliable reimbursement on missing animals. This bill would eliminate these problems for the committees and the producers.

Wallowa County has set rates that are determined each year by a group of ranchers. This is what is paid out to each producer with a loss making it easy for the committee and fair to all. This is one thing I would ask from this bill is to have the "fair market value" be a set value for all. This would help the Wolf Committee and would be fairest for all.

It is often asked why the animals aren't insured. The insurance is usually good for one claim and after that the insurance companies will not issue a policy with depredation on it so the compensation from the state is actually the only compensation producer can receive. The direct losses have always been paid at 100% from the state.

This bill will help compensate not only the loss of the animal but help with the indirect loss and time spent protecting our herds. We all try non-lethal measures of some sort, but when a wolf or a pack of wolves are hungry, there is no deterrence that will keep them from killing to fill that need. It is a survival instinct for them. We would rather not have our animals killed by these predators, but receiving financial help for our loss helps keep our operation in business.

I encourage you to support SB777

Cynthia Warnock