

2/28/2025

SB777

Chair Golden, Co-Chair Nash, and Senate Committee Members:

I am a veterinarian who has worked with livestock and companion animals in Eastern Oregon for over three decades. I have also been a member of the Umatilla County Wolf Depredation Committee for over a decade. I am writing in support of SB 777.

SB 777 brings structure, fairness and financial accountability to the Oregon depredation compensation program. SB 777 eliminates compensation for missing livestock which has been criticized as an area for potentially inflated claims. The bill applies a multiplier for compensation on confirmed or probable losses which helps bridge the gap for the very real uncompensated economic effects on livestock production in Areas of Known Wolf Activity (AKWA). (Including rate of gain, pregnancy rate reduction, body condition, handling ability, lost genetics).<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Animals that die from predators on large ranches or grazing allotments are not always found. When they are found there is often insufficient evidence for ODFW or Wildlife Services agents to classify the depredation as a probable or confirmed wolf depredation. Other predators exist and will be responsible for some of the losses but on these vast ranches and allotments in AKWA the methodology used is biased towards underestimating the actual number of wolf depredations occurring, and many depredations go unreported. The missing livestock category attempts to address these losses, acknowledging the potential underreporting of wolf related losses on large scale ranches and grazing allotments.

SB777 provides structure and fairness to the Oregon Wolf Depredation Program by continuing to prioritize best management practices in AKWA, balancing conservation efforts with ranching needs and promoting co-existence strategies. It also acknowledges the immediate and long-term economic impacts that go beyond the loss of the individual animal. It strengthens county-level depredation committees giving livestock owners and conservation activists a more structured way to collaborate on wolf-livestock management with continued transparency and accountability through annual reporting requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony on SB 777.

Tom Pitzer, DVM

## References

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2. Clark, P., & Johnson, D. E. (2009). Wolf-cattle interactions in the northern Rocky Mountains. In *Range Field Data 2009 Progress Report* (Special Report 1092, pp. 1–7). Oregon State University, Agricultural Experiment Station. Retrieved from <https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=246628>
3. Cooke, R. F., Bohnert, D. W., Reis, M. M., & Cappellozza, B. I. (2013). Wolf presence in the ranch of origin: Impacts on temperament and physiological responses of beef cattle following a simulated wolf encounter. *Journal of Animal Science*, 91(12), 5905–5911. <https://doi.org/10.2527/jas.2013-6777>
4. Stuebner, S. (n.d.). *Wolves Part 4: Unforeseen impacts caused by wolves in Idaho*. Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission. Retrieved from <https://idrange.org/range-stories/north-central-idaho/unforeseen-impacts-caused-by-wolves-in-idaho/>