Below is written Testimony in favor of SB 777

"In North America, wolves are primarily predators of medium and large hooved mammals, such as moose, elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, caribou, muskox and bison. Gray wolves have long legs that are well adapted to running, allowing them to move fast and travel far in search of food, and large skulls and jaws that are well suited to catching and feeding on large mammals. Wolves also have keen senses of smell, hearing and vision, which they use to detect prey and one another. Pelt color varies in wolves more than in almost any other species, from white to grizzled gray to brown to coal black.

During the early 1900s, predator-control programs resulted in the elimination of wolves throughout most of the conterminous United States, with the exception of northeast Minnesota. Gray wolves were originally listed under the Endangered Species Act as subspecies or as regional populations of subspecies in the contiguous United States and Mexico. In 1978, we reclassified the gray wolf as endangered at the species level (C. lupus) throughout the contiguous United States and Mexico, except for gray wolves in Minnesota which were classified as threatened. The Northern Rocky Mountains population was delisted due to recovery in 2011, except for Wyoming which was delisted in 2017. Remaining wolf populations in the contiguous United States were delisted due to recovery in 2021." Gray Wolf (Canis lupus) | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

However, in 2022 a Federal Judge reversed the delisting ruling and now 44 out of the 48 states protects the Gray Wolf, with exception of, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and portions of contiguous states. From wolf depredation evidence collected by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) the gray wolf population has possibly more than doubled within the state of Oregon just in the last four years. This is based solely on the number of increased depredations that have been recorded by ODWF on cattle from 2020 through 2024 in Attachment A below. Between 2009 through 2019 there were 88 cattle killed and 40 cattle injured. Between 2020 and 2024 there have been 199 cattle killed and 85 injured. ***This is a 56% increase in cattle depredation and a 53% increase in cattle injuries just over the last four years in comparison to the ten years before.***

This means there are factors happening within the wolf population and the type of prey they are now hunting. ***The mule deer population has decreased considerably throughout Oregon from apex predators and the wolves are now praying more on domestic livestock. This also means that the wolf population is increasing and their need for food supply is increasing as well.*** In 2024, of the $1,200,000 set aside in the 2023-2025 biennial budget for wolf depredation, $790,000 was sent out to Oregon Counties. However, 30% is allotted for wolf prevention and 10% is used for program implementation leaving the remainder of the $474,000 to be distributed between 15 different counties for wolf depredations. In 2024 there was a total of 50 killed or injured cattle and 67 killed or injured sheep and goats***. In a perfect world, if wolf kills occurred in every county there would only be $31,600 for each county to distribute to producers for 3.33 cattle and 4.46 sheep and goats per county that were injured and killed in 2024 throughout Oregon. That is an average of 8 animals in each county that are known to have been killed or injured.*** It does not matter what age the calf, heifer, steer, cow, bull, lamb, ewe, ram, kid, nanny or goat is at the time of the kill. ***The value of the animal is the marketable value of the loss within the producer's breeding livestock program.*** In today's market, one 760 lb. steer or heifer is worth an average of $1,872, a 1,200 lb. bred heifer is worth an average of $2,900 and 100 lb. lamb is worth $240. Three various sizes of livestock alone are valued at $5,012.00***. If a purebred bull calf, that is to be raised for sale for breeding is killed or injured, the producer is looking at a loss between $6,000 to $10,000 per animal. Therefore, the depredation payment factor needs to be increased to compensate these producers for these losses. If this does not happen then the Gray Wolf needs to be delisted so that ranchers and farmers can protect their livestock from these depredations and protect their viability and the American food supply. Please support Senate Bill 777.***

Sincerely,

Jenny Coelho, Oregon Cattlemen's Association Legislative Committee Co-Chair

Attachment A

[ODFW Wolves and Livestock Loss Investigations]

Tables of livestock attacked in confirmed and probable depredation events

Updated Jan. 27, 2025

These tables include livestock investigations where the determination was confirmed or probable. The tables show the number of confirmed and probable investigations statewide and in the west and east wolf management zones (WMZ),
not the number of depredation events.

Confirmed Depredation

	Number of Investigations			Number of Livestock Affected					
	Statewide Confirmed	West WMZ	East WMZ	Cattle		Sheep		Other[1]	
				Injured	Killed[2]	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed
2009	4		4		1		28		1
2010	9		9	1	8				
2011	12		12		13				
2012	8		8	4	4	1	8		
2013	13		13	6	5	1	6		1

2014	11		11	3	2	13	30	2	
2015	9	1	8	2	3	1	10		1
2016	24	8	16	7	11	1	7	1	2
2017	17	1	16	3	11				2
2018	28	11	17	13	17				3
2019	16	9	7	1	13		6		1
2020	31	16	15	5	23			2	2
2021	49	9	40	12	38	5	23	7	11
2022	76	27	49	21	54		20	1	6
2023	73	11	62	25	56	2	8		2
2024	72	11	61	22	28	2	62	3	

[1] Other refers to other species of livestock including goats, llamas, alpacas, and livestock working dogs. It does not include geese or chickens.

[2] The killed columns include livestock animals that were killed by wolves and those that were euthanized.

Probable Depredation

	Number of Investigations			Number of Livestock Affected					
	Statewide Probable	West WMZ	East WMZ	Cattle		Sheep		Other	
				Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed

2009									
2010	1		1		1				
2011	1		1		1				
2012	5		5	2	2				1
2013	2		2	1					1
2014	2		2		1				1
2015	2		2		1			2	
2016	3	1	2	1			1		1
2017									
2018									
2019	1	1					6		
2020	2		2	2	1				
2021	2	1	1	1	1				
2022	5		5	1	2		1	1	4
2023	4		4						
2024	12	1	11	1	5		9		