



March 11, 2025

Re: Testimony on SB 777-5 and SB 985

Chair Golden, Vice-chair Nash and the Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

In the February 2024 edition of High Country News, author Ben Goldfarb poses this question: **“Can coexistence with Wolves be Bought?”** The author takes us around the American West where states are grappling and struggling, like Oregon, with this very issue of compensation multipliers. While the author and many agree that fair market compensation for livestock losses makes sense for equity purposes, there is zero evidence that paying more for livestock losses changes the feelings that people and communities have towards wolves. The author cites a 2018 study in Oregon that showed more money for ranchers and livestock producers did not lead to fewer wolves killed at ranchers’ behests.

KS Wild opposes both SB 777-dash-5 amendment and the companion 985 bill and encourages this panel to not vote to advance the bills. SB 777 fails to address many Oregonian’s concerns when it comes to implementation of the Wolf Depredation Loss Compensation program.

If the legislature were serious about finding balance with this issue on wolf management and coexistence, any compensation bill would incorporate the following sideboards:

- 1) **Creation of a statewide livestock loss board that applies criteria consistently** and does not leave counties to decide a state-level system of payouts for confirmed or probable loss.
- 2) **Provisions for trainings on appropriate use of non-lethal measures** funded by the program.
- 3) **On-the-ground confirmation of the appropriate use of those tools** at the appropriate time and place.
- 4) **Design of a program so that producers who are successfully coexisting with wolves may still access support.**

The state’s wolf compensation fund was established to promote coexistence and achieve tolerance. The bill is a very expensive band-aid on a wound that isn’t likely to heal anytime soon. We should be making investments in prevention in the first place and not experimenting with untested ideas around compensation multipliers.

For the Wild,

Michael Dotson