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March 17, 2025

House Bill 3657: Addressing Wildlife Damage for Oregon's Farmers and Ranchers

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, members of the committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau supports House Bill 3657 and the -1 amendment as it establishes a wildlife damage prevention and compensation pilot program. OFB is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing more than 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

Wildlife damage is a persistent and growing challenge for Oregon's farmers and ranchers. House Bill 3657 -1 takes a proactive approach by establishing a pilot program within the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to provide both preventive assistance and compensation for eligible producers affected by wildlife damage.

OFB appreciates the Oregon State Legislature's commitment to tackling this issue. Our farmers and ranchers already bear the costs of wildlife conflicts, whether through crop loss, damaged fencing, or livestock depredation. While landowners take proactive steps to mitigate these risks, they should not have to shoulder the financial burden alone.

Unpredictable wildlife-related losses threaten the viability of Oregon's farms and ranches. By providing direct financial relief, this bill helps producers continue feeding our communities while preserving the state's agricultural heritage. Additionally, by integrating both prevention and compensation measures, HB 3657 -1 recognizes the shared responsibility of managing Oregon's wildlife populations.

For too long, farmers and ranchers have had limited recourse when suffering losses due to wildlife damage. HB 3657 -1 is a crucial first step toward addressing this imbalance—offering immediate relief to those affected while gathering essential data to inform future policy decisions.

OFB urges the committee to support this bill and Oregon's producers ensuring fair compensation for losses beyond their control.

Thank you.

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