

Submitter: Mary Brady

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2403

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mary Brady and I farm with my husband in Azalea and Glide. We raise sheep, hay and timber. We have generally not had issues with predators as we employ electric fence and predator lights.

But in a two year span we had a bear kill several lambs and adult sheep. It was very discouraging as some of the lambs killed, I had bottle fed and wanted to keep in our flock to grow it. We found one of the bears during daylight eating one of the lambs and with the communication of the Wildlife Services Agent we ethnized the animal. As stated by the Agent it is the younger bears that are venturing out on their own that often are the cause of livestock predation. We have not had bear issues the last three years and we know they are on our property because we have seen them. I say this to make you aware we know not all bears will kill our sheep. We do not kill bear just because they live around us.

The following year we had our first encounter from cougar. We had two sheep killed over a couple of days. A Wildlife Service agent came and confirmed that it was a cougar kill. We did not find that cougar but it later returned to kill over 12 lambs. Dead lambs were scattered all over the hillside. We had been walking the perimeter of the field each evening to try to detour this cougar. But he obviously knew when we were not present. The morning of finding the dead lambs we contacted the Wildlife Service agent again and he came down and was able to locate and euthanize the animal. We thankfully have had two years without predation.

We also had a sheep die that we didn't know what might have caused it. We contacted the Wildlife Service agent who walked the whole fence line with me to see if a predator might have come under a fence. As he concluded that the death was not caused by predator no action was needed.

As I have stated we do not just kill predators because they might kill, we only euthanize if they have cause damage. An animal that can live along with the sheep without killing is a good animal and will often keep others at bay.

I urge you to support HB 2403 to allow us the tools we may need when the worst happens.