

Submitter: Hillary Tiefer

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

SB 777-5 - the Wolf Compensation 5x Multiplier bill is an OCN "Major Threat." Please vote no on SB 777-5.

First, the Wolf Compensation program has only a low enrollment by ranchers because the problem with wolves is not a pervasive one. Moreover, most ranchers have asked for ways to coexist with wolves. Among possible deterrents are the use of guard animals such as certain breeds of dogs, llamas, or donkeys, motion-controlled lights and noises, range riders, special fencing, and deterrent odors.

The Wolf Compensation 5x Multiplier bill doesn't allow for an ODFW FTE wolf coexistence biologist who can make the best decision on how to use nonlethal means of preventing wolf attacks on livestock. An enormous amount of money will go to compensation rather than other approaches to keep livestock safe and protect the wolf population. Indeed, paying so much over the market value of the livestock hardly is a motivator to protect the livestock! This rate should be decreased to the multiplier to 3x (calves and lambs), 2x (goat, sheep, cows), 1x (livestock guardian dogs, all other livestock). No other state allocates so many funds in this way. Washington's compensation program has to do with the size of the allotment (some producers are eligible for a 2x multiplier). Idaho and Montana have no multipliers.

While attacks on livestock by wolves are low (approximately 0.000056% of Oregon's sheep and cows were killed by wolves in 2023), wolf killings are on the rise both by poaching and by a government agency. According to data from Cascadia Wildlands, "In 2021 the population was 173 wolves, with 26 total mortalities, 21 of which were human caused (including 8 poisonings), and 8 agency killings. In 2022 the approximate wolf population was 175 wolves, 20 known mortalities, 17 human caused, 6 agency killings and 1 caught in the act. ODFW authorized 16 killings in 2023, twice that of 2021, more than double from 2022, with an increase in the population in those years of just 5 wolves. In 2023 Oregon's minimum wolf population was 178 wolves, with at least 30 known human-caused mortalities: 16 agency authorized killings, 12 poached, 1 killed by a hunter, 1 hit by a car. Of the 26 documented wolf deaths in 2024, 22 were caused by humans and at least 7 were [by] poaching. Two wolves have already been poached in 2025." Poaching remains a concern and SB 777 provides no motivation to find nonlethal means to deal with

wolves and thereby protect the wolf population.

Moreover, without increased funding, SB 777 will rapidly drain existing funds. This inevitably will not help ranchers or protect wolves. SB985 should be combined with SB777. SB 985 is the \$2 million dollar appropriation request because of SB777, and therefore will have to go to Ways and Means. As a single bill it will clarify how much the program will cost taxpayers.

There has to be a required confirmation of the appropriate use of non-lethal tools by ODFW for those applying for program support. For non-lethal tools to be effective, it's necessary to use the best approach for a given situation (including considerations of allotment size, geography, livestock species, season, etc.). That is why a ODFW FTE wolf coexistence biologist is necessary.

We need humane and insightful approaches in Oregon to accommodate its ranchers and its wildlife. SB777 does not properly offer such an approach. Until necessary changes have been made, SB 777-5 will remain a "Major Threat to a Healthy Oregon."

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Hillary Tiefer, PhD