

Submitter: Wally Sykes

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Committee Members:

I've lived in Wallowa County since 1995 and have been on the Wallowa County Wolf Compensation Committee since its inception in 2011.

I oppose SB 777 as written but could support it if it was amended to account for certain problems sometimes encountered by the Wallowa Committee in judging nonlethal management compensation claims, especially those requiring added human presence. Committees need independent verification of human presence, especially where claimants are from out of county and thus unknown to Committee members. Some Committees might passively use the highest multiplier under these conditions, thus approving unjustified expense to an already burdened Compensation Fund.

Compensation Committees approve confirmed or probable direct loss claims, but there is always some level of technical uncertainty as to whether the predated livestock was sick or injured. Some percentage of these animals were probably in poor condition, thus inviting attack. Predation investigations normally ignore these distinctions, but these animals may have gone on to die of natural causes, and it's the job of producers to monitor the health of their stock and care for them appropriately.

To account for the above, I suggest the Bill be amended to reduce the multipliers from the current 5 and 3 to 3 and 2, and that an agency such as ODFW be tasked with verifying all nonlethal management tools used, especially added human presence.

Thank you.