

Submitter: Elise Flynn

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

My name is Elise Flynn, I'm a veterinarian and rancher's wife living in Lake County, Oregon and I stand in favor of Senate Bill 777. Wolf depredation is a very recent and raw issue for us. Our family ranch was one of the many victims of the collared and habituated wolf known as OR158, and it was our personal experience and story that led to his lethal removal on February 26th. We had sincere fear - fear for the safety of our livestock and pets, but also fear for ourselves and our small children. While we are beyond grateful for the responsible action taken by US fish and wildlife to lethally take this wolf, there were 26 days and nights that we lived in extreme anxiety, fear and despair. There is no dollar amount that will heal us from the emotional and mental torment we endured. While our financial loss can be addressed, it is the hidden secondary and indirect costs and consequences of wolf depredation that need to be brought to light.

These secondary costs are not accounted for with the compensation of a single calf lost. Nothing accounts for the opportunity loss of that calf, and the stress induced on the herd. That stress leads to secondary sickness, poor conception rates, and increased abortion rates. Then there are the non-fatal injuries acquired, veterinary expenses, the damage to property such as fence-lines getting torn down by stampeding cattle, and the expense of re-construction of property and operation in an attempt to prevent depredation in the future. There are many instances, where cattle and sheep no longer use pasture adequately for fear of wolves, and livestock management practices can no longer be done in a financially practical manner.

As a veterinarian, I am seeing more and more of my clientele facing these exact issues. They are absolutely real and financially devastating. We have been forced to coexist with the wolf - and we are willing - but the rancher cannot exist if we cannot survive financially. If we must accept the damage of the wolf, then we must be repaid fairly for our true losses. This compensation multiplier and fair market value payment is easily justified, deserved and necessary to coexist and survive.

Members of the committee, I implore you to realize, that the voice of the Rancher simply cannot compete with the loudness of the wolf activists. We don't live in the cities with the masses - we live in the far quiet corners. Our jobs, taking care of livestock, require us to be present for them 24/7. We do not have the free-time to advocate for ourselves adequately or easily. We are not the wolf activist that is getting paid to lobby against us. These activists do not live with the wolves, so how could they know the reality that we know? Why should they have a voice about an

industry they know nothing about? Please don't be deceived - it is our story that is the truth.