

Oregon Senate Bill Hearing Committee

April 30, 2025

Sub: Testimony in **opposition of SB 777** (wolf depredation compensation fund bill)

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Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash and committee members, as one who supports co-existence of the ranching community with our wildlife, specifically wolves, I urge you to vote NO on SB 777 and its companion funding bill SB985.

The proposed 5X compensation multiplier would rapidly defund the ability of the program to efficiently support non-lethal measures which can and does prevent wolf livestock interactions. With over 1.3 million cattle against our current population of 204 wolves this compensation bill would grossly benefit the producers as it does not require them to introduce and maintain practices that effectively reduce the loss of livestock to wolves. Nor does it protect wolves from being lethally removed if a predation is confirmed.

This bill was promoted to achieve tolerance for wolves by the livestock industry; however, in fact this measure would have the opposite effect. This bill would create the opportunity for non-action by the producers as there is no incentive for them to adopt and use non-lethal measures when a confirmed depredation allows them to be compensated 5x+ the animal's worth. Data has shown that most livestock deaths are due to disease, loss or other, and of which they receive no direct state compensation.

I am not against producers receiving a fair market value for a confirmed loss or injury, but this proposed 5x multiplier does not promote coexistence. It allows for the producers to be less proactive in learning and adopting non-lethal measures. Why do anything different if you are promised to be paid 5 times the value of your livestock?

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I suggest that any producer receiving compensation for an ODFW confirmed depredation be required to additionally attend ranching with wolves workshops on non lethal measures. In Fall of 2023 ,2 NGO's, Working Circle and Defenders of Wildlife sponsored a workshop on ranching with wolves in Paisley and Terrebonne. The presenters were 2 ranchers that have successfully co-existed with nearby wolves. In fact one of the presenter's ranches is located just outside of Yellowstone. It is unfortunate that the OCA (Oregon Cattle Assoc.) learned of the workshop and actually discouraged their members from attending the one in Paisley and it was subsequently cancelled. Had they attended they would have learned from other ranchers who have successfully adopted non lethal measures into their ranching practices which not only reduced and eliminated wolf depredations, but also improved the health of the herd, increased birth rate, and strengthened herd response to predators. If these measures had been in place , then there is a very strong chance that wolf 158 would not have caused the associated damages, resulting in another endangered wolf being lethally removed.

Throwing a 5x multiplier at livestock loss is not a long term viable improvement to coexistence. Whereas supporting and funding education with verifiable implementation of non lethal actions with ODFW and independent programs can build beneficial and effective results for both the producer and our vulnerable wolf population. We should be redirecting our public funds into proactive education on ranching with wolves as an investment into the future of coexistence.

Please vote NO SB777 and SB985

Thank you for your consideration,
Wendy von Kalinowski