

Submitter: Allison Myers

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB777

Dear Committee, I am writing on behalf of myself as an Oregon resident, offering my expertise as someone with doctoral-level training in public health (PhD, Health Behavior, 2016, UNC-Chapel Hill) and 20+ years of experience promoting health and well-being at the community level. I am also someone with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Resource Management and started my career as an environmental educator with the US Peace Corps in the Haut Ogooue province of Gabon in west central Africa. I have vivid memories of being in the village of Okonja, with my community partners, leading conversation about sustainable harvests, preventing poaching, and protecting endangered species. It was there that the women in the village described the health challenges that needed to be addressed (food insecurity, diarrhea, malaria) alongside any effort to also become (in their words) "advocates for the environment". It was in that moment that I pivoted my career to public health - to caring for humans, as they care for the environment around them. In listening to the testimony about SB 777A today, I am reminded again, and again struck by the terrible toll that wolves are taking on the mental health of our ranchers. I am a known advocate for suicide prevention in the ag and natural resource community, and today I want to support SB 777A because it takes an important step to give our ranchers some of what they are asking for, as a need, to care for their cattle, the land, their livelihoods, our food sources, and also their well-being. Thank you for keeping top of mind the very real human health toll that folks are also seeking to address with this bill.