

Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Gentlemen:

I understand that Oregon Department of Agriculture is presenting their proposed budget to the Joint Committee this week. As you know, ODA carries the responsibility for distributing and managing the grant funds allocated by the State for Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance for Non-Lethal Wolf-Livestock interaction prevention.

As the wolf populations continue to grow and disperse across the state the need for these funds will rise. At this time the ranching income is a mainstay of the economy of Wallowa County. Whenever a major economic sector in a County such as ours suffers, it creates a ripple effect among the other economies which then has a detrimental effect on individual citizens and their ability to maintain a livelihood in Wallowa County. These issues are not only Wallowa County issues but are shared across the Northeastern Region where the bulk of the wolf populations occur, and unfortunately may spread westward over time. Although direct loss to stock, as confirmed by ODFW, seems to have diminished; the in-direct or above historic operations loss has continued to grow in areas populated by one or more wolf packs.

On behalf of Wallowa County, I would urge the Subcommittee to support and consider increasing the ODA budget request for the Wolf Depredation Grant Program.

Respectfully,

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