

Chair Witt and members of the Committee,

I am writing to inform you of the Douglas County Farm Bureau's support and endorsement of HB3188.1. This bill will provide the means for the residents of Douglas County, and in particular, Agricultural Producers, to maintain and hopefully increase the efficacy of current predator control measures enacted within the county.

Agricultural production accounts for approximately \$76,500,000 of revenue annually in Douglas County. Predator control is an integral part of profitably raising livestock, primarily cattle and sheep, in the vegetation and terrain that make up agricultural lands in the County. Without appropriate predator control, producers will experience not only loss of valuable animals and their offspring through livestock killed, but also decreased productivity of the animals from the stress of being preyed upon. In 2012, lamb losses alone due to predation accounted for \$2.2 million in unrealized revenue. To offset losses, Douglas County livestock producers would be forced to move production into confinement facilities, at very high infrastructure costs, or discontinue the production of livestock, which could lead to conversion to other land uses which would not have the same benefits as the open space of pasture lands. Taking land best suited for grazing animals out of production would decrease its value, further harming the economic conditions in the County.

Predator control in Douglas County is provided by USDA Wildlife Services. They receive funding from four different revenue streams currently. They receive federal funding from USDA, and State funding from Oregon Departments of Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife. In addition, they receive funding from Douglas County. The funding from the County is diminishing as it struggles to deal with decreasing federal timber payments, and decreased property values from the economic recession. In fact, over one-fifth of the County's contribution to Wildlife Services budget in Douglas County comes directly from Title III monies. As payments in lieu of timber harvest continue to dwindle, the future of this program is tenuous at best. The Douglas County Farm Bureau believes that the creation of a Predator Control District will ensure the continuance of vital service for the production of livestock, while not burdening all county residents with the cost of such protections.

The passage of HB3188.1 is of utmost importance to the successful continuation of production agriculture in Douglas County. Without adequate funding that the Predator Control District this bill will provide for, agricultural producers in the County will suffer losses beyond their ability to absorb.

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