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MEASURE HB 3188
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SUBMITTED BY: Ron Jort

Oregon State Legislature

House of Representatives

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Salem, Oregon

House Bill 3188 as amended

Dear Representative Witt and Committee Members,

We would like to provide the following information about HB 3188 as amended, that you will be considering today. While there are two bills HB 3140 and HB 3188 both dealing with a Predator District, we believe HB 3188 as amended comes closer to achieving the program we set out to achieve.

Back ground:

Douglas County has had and will continue to have predator problems because of the topography and terrain that is conducive to predation. Sometime back, Douglas County was in a position to fund a Predator management program and it controlled (not eliminated) predators here in the County. Through various reasons, mostly funding, the program was eliminated. Predation on the Agriculture community accelerated to the point that it was out of control. The County then stepped in and with some matching funds was able to contribute some county funding and enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with APHIS-Wildlife Services. While the number of personnel is less, now 3 and previously under the county 7, they are able to keep up and have a reasonable and effective Predator Management Program. However, now the funding for the program from the County is diminishing because of timber not being harvested and the Federal Safety Net funding is going away our program faces reduction or elimination. This would be a major setback. This is why we have proposed an alterative to help with the loss of revenue and still have a stable Predator Management program.

Our proposal is unique and innovative and offers a way to finance the Predator Program here in Douglas County and other Counties should they so choose. It creates a District of willing land owners that is created by the County Commissioners, with an advisory board made up of the stake holders and one outside representative. This advisory board would make recommendations to the Commissioners about the program. It gives the final authority to the County to determine an assessment on a per acre basis. This assessment would be collected by the county as other funds are, such as the Oregon Department of Forestry fire funds and etc., then placed in special account and disbursed toward the Predator management program. These District funds could then be matched against Federal and State funds. This would not be creating an additional governmental entity, not require additional staffing, other than someone to draft the Intergovernmental agreement for Predator Management services.

It has a "Sun Set" clause so that the program can be evaluated to determine if the program is working. It has maximum of $1.00 per acre limit so the program cannot be just another money generator to fund programs that are not related to Predator management.

Your help in allowing this Legislation to go forward will assist Douglas and maybe other Counties to create their own destiny, help with Predator Management, and allow for a stable and sustainable program.

Financial Loss due to Predation of Sheep in Douglas County:

The latest figures that have been collected by the "National Agriculture Statistics Service" show that in the State of Oregon per year, there are 7,300 head of ewes and lambs killed by coyotes. Since Douglas County has 10.6% of the sheep in the State that means that Douglas County, on average, looses 730 ewes and lambs annually to coyote predation. The average price per head at the time of the survey collection was $147.00. This amounts to approximately $107,000.00 in losses just to Coyotes. This figure does not include bears, cougars, foxes, eagles and etc. It also does not figure the loss of future potential that the lost livestock could create.

These figures are with a Predator Management Program in place, just think what would happen without some type of program! This is why it is such an important issue for both the Agriculture and Forestry Industries. It is our hope you will recommended HB 3188 as amended to go forward.

Thank you for all you have done and will do for us in the future.

Sincerely,

Ron Hjort, Oakland, Oregon

Dan Dawson, Roseburg, Oregon