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TESTIMONY

Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Oregon Farm Bureau supports HB 3188A and the -3 amendments

Chair Edwards and members of the committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) asks for your support of HB 3188A and the -3 amendments. OFB has worked with Rep. Caddy McKeown (D-Coos Bay) and Rep. Dallas Heard (R-Roseburg) to find a funding solution for certain counties to retain predator management services and protect local ag-dependent economies.

Many rural residents rely on effective predator management to prevent costly depredation on their livestock or timber. However, as payments in lieu of timber harvest continue to decrease, the future of current predator management programs in rural counties is tenuous. HB 3188A would provide a voluntary mechanism for agricultural and timber producers to maintain the effectiveness of current predator control services within the county without imposing a tax on the general public. HB 3188A would give livestock producers the ability to contribute to the funding of the county's trapping program and free up money to go to other county services—such as law enforcement or road improvements.

HB 3188A as amended by the -3:

- Allows over 50% of landowners/ producers to petition the county to form a separate funding district to pay for predator management in the district
- Creates an advisory board of producers to establish the boundaries of the district and set the rate of incurred charge annually
- Includes a voluntary opt-out if a landowner/ producer does not want to participate
- Provides alternative funding mechanism to fund county predator control services

Without effective predator control, our producers would experience significant losses of livestock (and their offspring) that they cannot absorb. HB 3188A is important to the successful continuation of production agriculture in many rural counties, and we ask you to vote YES on the -3 amendments and move this bill out of committee.

For additional information, please contact: Jenny Dresler with the Oregon Farm Bureau