

Wallowa County Stockgrowers Association

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February 20, 2017

Dear Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Brad Witt,

We are writing this letter to support the continuation of funding for the Wolf Compensation Program. The Wallowa County Stockgrowers support this funding because we are ranchers who incur losses from the wolf. This funding is one of the only tools we have to non-lethally reduce wolf predation on livestock. We have been doing our part in working with ODFW in order to keep livestock losses to a minimum. However, livestock loss does occur. The funding from the Wolf Compensation Program helps compensate some of these losses.

Another way Wallowa County has been able to benefit from funding from the Wolf Compensation Program is the range rider. This program has been instrumental in helping ranchers haze wolves away from their cattle. The range rider works closely with ODFW and producers, visiting areas where collared wolves are shown to be. He alerts livestock owners when wolves are in the presence of their cattle. This position, which is a non-lethal practice, is critical in the protection of our livestock. Without the funding we would lose our range rider program, which would undoubtedly contribute to a greater death toll on our livestock.

As ranchers, we are suffering from having wolves on our grazing lands. Not only from direct losses, but also from indirect losses such as breeding and calving difficulty, distressed cattle and overall health issues. The Wallowa County Stockgrowers is asking for careful consideration on this important issue. With this funding we can continue non-lethal practices in order to help reduce depredations and protect our livestock.

As wolves disperse to other counties and Wallowa County is in competition for compensation dollars from a wider area of the state you need to think about an indexed fund based on the population of wolves. As the wolf population increases the compensation fund needs to increase proportionally.

Every wolf in the state of Oregon will come in contact with livestock during their life.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We hope this funding will be included in the state budget again.

Sincerely,



Jill McClaran, President