

*Please submit for the record*

Oregon Cattlemen's Association supports HB 2746

Chair Witt and members of the committee, my name is Jerome Rosa and I am Executive Director of The Oregon Cattleman's Association.

We have many members, particularly those in the Northeastern and Southern parts of our state who would love to testify in person today. Please don't mistake our members' inability to attend this morning's hearing for their support of this bill and concern for this topic. As you all can guess, we're very happy to be receiving snowfall around the state, but the weather, coupled with calving season has many of our members out braving the elements for their livelihood and their herds.

Over the past 15 years, our members have been intimately involved with Oregon's successful wolf management and conservation plan. This hasn't always been easy. From the onset, Oregon livestock producers have been concerned about the toll that co-existing with wolves could take directly on our cattle through depredation, and indirectly through weight loss, stress and herd movements where wolves are present. More specifically, as wolf packs spread throughout the state, more ranchers are on the hook for directly paying for deterrence measures, wolf monitoring and information sharing that is all critical to minimizing wolf-livestock conflict, and providing ranchers with better information to protect their cattle, put their minds at ease, and secure their continuing commitment to Oregon's unique approach to wolf conservation and management.

While our continued discussions and review over Oregon's wolf plan have been contentious, many stakeholders and the public at-large seem to agree on one concept – that those who bear the largest cost of coexistence with wolves should be fairly compensated for their losses.

HB 2746 is a pragmatic solution to keeping the legislature and the public adequately informed about the successes of wolf conservation in Oregon, and in turn (where practicable) fund appropriate measures for deterrence and loss compensation. While OCA and our members haven't always and don't always fully embrace all of the difficult issues related to having wolves in Oregon, there is no question that our current buy-in and commitment to work collaboratively, and the real resources offered by ranchers, are a significant component of the rapid growth of wolf populations in the state. We know that as wolves expand across the landscape, that in the near-term, our members will be tasked with employing more resources to deter wolves from harassing or preying on cattle.

We've already seen creative solutions and significant predation in the areas of the state where wolves are still federally listed. Please support HB 2746 and show our ranchers that their sacrifices and costs in the name of wolf conservation are recognized, appreciated, and supported.