

I am writing to ask you to move HB 3167 out of the revenue committee. This bill simply removes a sunset on an existing program that allowed myself and other landowners in Douglas County to assess ourselves to help our county pay for the existing predator control contract with USDA Wildlife Services. HB 3167 passed out of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee with a "do pass" recommendation, and was referred to Revenue as result of mistaken belief that the bill would potentially impact the Douglas County tax rolls.

This bill is supported by AOC and will have no impact on county revenues. It simply removes the sunset on a very successful program that has allowed landowners like myself to pitch in and help the county fund the cost of USDA Wildlife Services predator management. Predator Management is critical for my operation because as a small sheep producer I can be critically impacted by predators. A one-night coyote attack could easily eliminate 25% of my income potential.

USDA Wildlife Services always looks to non-lethal methods of predator control first, and they keep extensive records on the predator control they do and methods they use that are publicly available. Wildlife Services does very focused predator control and they are the trained professionals in this business compared to the ranchers engaging in predator management.

I am Board member of the Douglas County Predator District and as such am charged with the rest of the board to set policy and represent the other members of the District. As revenues available to the Douglas County Commissioners has decreased is has become essential that another source of revenue be developed. The district has provided that source. The County has records that are publicly available that state how much money they devote to predator control and what portion of that comes from our predator control district.

I understand that some groups do not like predator management, but I think most of their concerns about this bill are based on both misunderstandings of this funding mechanism and misunderstandings of how USDA Wildlife Services does their work. This bill simply removes the sunset on an existing funding mechanism – it does not authorize any changes to predator management or create any new predator management programs. USDA Wildlife Services emphasizes non-lethal management, and their work is all publicly available.

As a land owner in Douglas County who voluntarily asses myself for the predator district, I recommended passing this bill, and there is no revenue impact. I urge you to move it forward.

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