

Submitter: Susanna Askins

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, and Water

Measure: HB4127

Why I oppose HB 4127 -

1. The program's "missing livestock" component is controversial and unverifiable:

Cattle

go missing for many reasons including negligence, theft, drought, wildfire, other predators

and illness. There is no sideboards on payments for "missing" livestock — no proof of cattle put out versus brought in and no presence of wolves or known depredation in the

area. Payment requests are for the full amount of the cattle. These are claims that are not

transparent, hard to verify and has been part of many investigative journalism including by

OPB and High Country News. Back-filling the program for this biennium means making up

for the missing livestock claims. And these claims are disproportionately higher than confirmed depredation. For context, cattle being the main livestock in Oregon, in 2021

confirmed and probable wolf depredation and injuries accounted for 50 cattle. In comparison, 679 missing livestock claims have been made, mostly based on anecdotal information.

2. The program already received additional \$400,000 for 2021-2023 biennium: The money

has only started to roll out of ODA. We cannot determine the sufficiency and the usage of

this additional sum of money till the end of the biennium.

3. The program is in need of reform: The Fund was established in 2011 and to this date, it

has not been revisited or revised. We had very few wolves in 2-3 counties in 2011 and

wolves were a protected species. We have wolves in 12 counties now and they are no

longer protected. Poaching is rampant (9 wolves poached within the last year). While compensation pays for depredation and even missing livestock, wolves are also killed as a response to the same depredations by ODFW. This is not promoting co-existence

or building tolerance. Many producers agree that the program is dire need of reform.

Their

voices need to be heard as well. Throwing money at a problem will not make it go away.