

Submitter: Lisa Billings

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure: HB4127

The Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund is in significant need of reform. When the fund was established eleven years ago, Oregon's wolf population was not only a fraction of its current size, wolves were also under federal protection by the ESA. Fast forward to 2022, and while their population is still fledgling, they are being poached at higher rates than ever, despite the existing extremely low threshold of evidence a livestock owner needs to be compensated for a loss. It is well documented that livestock who graze in the open range are vulnerable to a host of life-threatening factors, the least of which being wolves. It appears obvious that the livestock industry has no problem taking opportune advantage of this program and its loose burden of proof - otherwise, with only 50 confirmed wolf depredations in 2021 why do we see 679 missing livestock claims? Claims without evidence should be rejected outright, and the program's administrators should hold themselves to this strict standard. After all, ODFW sees no problem in killing wolves who predate on cattle, so essentially the public is punished twice - by paying the rancher AND seeing biodiversity loss on our landscapes. This bill is not a productive approach to problem solving; state agencies should be focused on enabling co-existence, building tolerance and responsible stewardship of public resources. I strongly oppose HB4127 and ask that ODA instead invest in science-based reform of the Wolf Compensation Fund.