

Submitter: Susan Strauss

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: HB4080

Our family lives in a rural community. We own livestock and our neighbors own livestock. My husband and daughter are hunters. Neither we nor any of our neighbors support this bill, HB 4080. When we buy beef, we only buy from ranchers that support predator-friendly, non-lethal practices -- and, we have many choices of such ranchers to buy from. These ranchers can be as close as a neighbor and as far as John Day.

Every morning we enjoy watching a local coyote hunting mice in a neighbor's field -- enjoying, also, other wildlife because where there are predators, there is, of course, other wildlife. Years ago, the man who owned this field thought he had to kill every coyote in sight to protect his livestock. Following his actions, all of our fields and our neighbor's fields were over run with ground squirrels. Every neighbor remarked about the flood of ground squirrels. Even the neighbor who shot coyotes complained. We tried to tell him that his practices were responsible. We know of the largest sheep ranch in Idaho that survives just fine without a single kill from any predator, using only non-lethal methods. Even after initial skepticism, they document that the most cost effective protection of their business is using non-lethal methods __ this, over killing programs or reimbursement fund programs. See link to film: <https://wildlifecoexistence.org/the-wood-river-wolf-project/>. Our neighbor who believed in shooting coyotes, died. His attitude was an antiquated one that also needs to die. We cannot provide our children a future in which we have to kill everything in order to do our human business. If we sustain a few losses, that is part of doing business. In an age of mass extinctions, we need our predators to support our healthy, balanced wild ecosystems. We cannot support with Oregon tax dollars the highly controversial federal program, "Wildlife Service." What a joke -- as if slaughtering, in cruel ways, hundreds of thousands of native wildlife is doing them a "service." Plenty of current scientific research demonstrates that killing coyotes and wolves leads to INCREASES in livestock predation. One rancher that supplies our family told me that her neighbor warned her of a coyote seen in the area. My rancher laughed, "They are not a real threat to us. If I could see one or a wolf, I would be delighted." There are folks on the ground who are making positive changes. We need to support them, learn from them __ actual family ranchers who are discovering successful ways of living in harmony with Nature. We need to distinguish their work from the political arm of the livestock industry. Modern farmers and ranchers are most successful when they work in harmony with the benefits of neighboring wild lands -- and not at constant war with them.