



February 11, 2022

Chair Pam Marsh  
Vice Chair Zach Hudson  
Vice Chair David Brock Smith  
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

**RE: OPPOSE H.B. 4080**

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Smith, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 4080, the bill allowing the creation of districts to fund predator control operations by USDA Wildlife Services. On behalf of Animal Wellness Action, the Center for a Humane Economy, and our supporters in Oregon, we urge you to vote NO on HB 4080.

In addition to my role as director of campaigns for these organizations, I also teach Wildlife Law, Alaskan Wildlife Law, Endangered Species Act, Animal Law, and Animal Agriculture Law at Willamette University. I have studied and written extensively on issues involving wildlife, native carnivores, livestock, and a science-based approach to controlling conflicts between livestock and wildlife.

I live and work in Sutherlin, Oregon, in Douglas County. I have close friends in Douglas County, elsewhere in Oregon, and around the country who raise livestock. I grew up on a small farm in southern Oregon where we raised cattle and other farm animals. I grew up in an avid hunting family and developed a love and appreciation for the outdoors and wildlife from an early age.

It is our position that HB 4080 should be rejected because it fails to require nonlethal measures as part of the programs created by the districts. As you are aware, Oregon has a long and proud tradition of embracing humane treatment of all animals and protecting wildlife from unnecessary killing. Social attitudes toward the killing of wildlife have evolved in recent decades, and the public no longer accepts broadscale removal of native carnivores from their habitats as a first step in addressing conflicts with livestock. Those evolving attitudes are reflected in exciting new programs and innovations to improve and expand nonlethal measures to protect livestock and wild carnivores alike.

In my home state of Idaho, the Wood River Wolf Project, managed and led in part by a commercial livestock company that grazes thousands of sheeps in wolf territory, has proven that losses to livestock in areas that emphasize nonlethal deterrents are substantially lower than areas that continue to focus exclusively on killing wolves. A 2017 Idaho study co-authored by wolf advocates and scientists for USDA Wildlife services concluded that adaptive, nonlethal

measures do a far better job overall of controlling conflicts between wolves and livestock  
<https://academic.oup.com/jmammal/article/98/1/33/2977254>.

To quote the abstract:

“We collected data on sheep depredation mortalities in the protected demonstration study area and compared these data to an adjacent wolf-occupied area where sheep were grazed without the added nonlethal protection measures. Over the 7-year period, sheep depredation losses to wolves were 3.5 times higher in the Nonprotected Area (NPA) than in the Protected Area (PA). Furthermore, no wolves were lethally controlled within the PA and sheep depredation losses to wolves were just 0.02% of the total number of sheep present, in the lowest loss rate among sheep-grazing areas in wolf range statewide, whereas the wolves were lethally controlled in the NPA. Our demonstration project provides evidence that proactive use of a variety of nonlethal techniques applied conditionally can help reduce depredation on large open-range operations.”

The International Wildlife Coexistence Network (<https://wildlifecoexistence.org/>) reports that nonlethal deterrents are being used successfully around the world, in the U.S., in Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia to reduce conflicts with an immense array of wildlife species, including wolves, bison, lions, elephants, dingoes, tigers, jaguars, and more.

While we understand the need for producers to protect their livestock, nonlethal deterrents should be prioritized in establishing any program to address conflicts with wild species. The wildlife of Oregon is held in trust for all Oregonians, and we believe most Oregonians support treating wildlife humanely and with an eye toward fostering coexistence, not lethal conflicts.

For these reasons, please vote NO on HB 4080.

Thank you for considering our position and for your service to the people and animals of Oregon.

Scott Beckstead  
Sutherlin, Oregon