House Bill 2631

Sponsored by Representative LEVY B, Senator HANSELL; Representatives HIEB, SMITH DB (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Provides that compensation for loss or injury to livestock or working dogs under wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program must be based on multiplier of not more than seven times fair market value of livestock or working dogs and recommendation of county advisory committee.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to the effects of wolves on livestock; amending ORS 610.150.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 610.150 is amended to read:

610.150. (1) As used in this section:

(a) “Area of known wolf activity” means an area designated by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife as having known wolf activity.

(b) “Livestock” means ratites, psittacines, horses, mules, jackasses, cattle, llamas, alpacas, sheep, goats, swine, bison, domesticated fowl and any fur-bearing animal bred and maintained commercially, or otherwise, within pens, cages or hutches.

(c) “Working dog” means any animal of the species Canis familiaris used to aid in the herding or guarding of livestock.

(2) The State Department of Agriculture shall establish and implement a wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program, using moneys in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established under ORS 610.155, to provide grants to assist counties to implement county programs under which:

(a) Compensation is provided to persons who suffer probable or confirmed loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation; and

(b) Financial assistance is provided to persons who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock.

(3) Subject to available funding in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established under ORS 610.155, a county qualifies for a grant under the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program if the county:

(a) Establishes a county program to:

(A) Compensate persons who suffer loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation; and

(B) Provide financial assistance to persons who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock] provide compensation and financial assistance as described in subsection (2) of this section.

(b) Contributes an amount of moneys equal to 10 percent of the amount necessary to implement,
during the calendar year, the county program.

(c) Establishes [a procedure] procedures by which persons applying, under the county pro-
gram, for:

(A) Compensation [under the county program] provide evidence of the loss or injury [to livestock
or working dogs due to wolf depredation. Evidence of the loss or injury must include], including a
finding by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife or the department's designated agent that wolf
depredation was the probable cause of the loss or injury.

(B) Financial assistance provide an estimate of the potential cost of the livestock man-
agement techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques.

d) Establishes a county advisory committee to oversee the county program, consisting of one
county commissioner, two members who own or manage livestock and two members who support
wolf conservation or coexistence with wolves. The county advisory committee, once established by
the county, shall agree upon two county business representatives to serve as additional county ad-
visory committee members.

e) Establishes a procedure by which persons applying for financial assistance under the county
program provide an estimate of the potential cost of the livestock management techniques or nonlethal
wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation.

(4) In accordance with the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, the Director of
Agriculture shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section, including [but not limited
to] rules that require participating counties to:

(a) Require that Prioritize awarding grants to livestock owners and managers experiencing
above-normal loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to probable or confirmed wolf
depredation [be given priority by counties for grant moneys received under the wolf depredation com-
penation and financial assistance grant program].

(b) Require counties participating in the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance
grant program to:

(A) Prepare an annual report that specifies the actions taken by, and compensation paid and fi-
nancial assistance provided to, counties under the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance
grant program;

(b) Prepare annual reports that describe the counties’ actions taken under the county
grant programs, including the amounts provided as compensation and financial assistance.

(B) Distribute grant program funds, to the extent possible, in an equal and balanced manner
between [payments to compensate for loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf
depredation and payments to implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence
techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock] compensation and financial as-
sistance, with a minimum of 30 percent of grant program funds being distributed for [livestock
management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf
depredation of livestock; and] financial assistance.

(C) Establish compensation rates for probable or confirmed loss or injury to livestock or
working dogs [due to wolf depredation] that are based on a multiplier of not more than seven
times the fair market value of the livestock or working dogs and the recommendation of the
county advisory committee described in subsection (3)(d) of this section.

(e) Establish eligibility requirements for compensation under county programs that ensure,
contingent upon available funds, that:

(A) Outside an area of known wolf activity, [as designated by the State Department of Fish and
Wildlife, confirmed loss or injury to livestock or working dogs shall be compensated] the compensation is provided regardless of the preexistence of wolf deterrence techniques;

(B) Within an area of known wolf activity, [as designated by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, confirmed loss or injury to livestock or working dogs, as well as missing livestock above the level based on loss or injury attributable to causes other than wolf depredation established by the county advisory committee described in subsection (3)(d) of this section, shall be compensable] the compensation is provided only if owners have demonstrated implementation of best management practices to deter wolves, including reasonable use of nonlethal methods when practicable, giving priority for compensation of confirmed losses at fair market value and with other compensation claims determined according to the recommendation of the county advisory committee; and

(C) Any compensation [for loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation] is based upon a finding by the local advisory committee that the person did not unreasonably or purposefully create circumstances that attract wolves or encourage conflict between wolves and livestock or working dogs.

(5) Each biennium the State Department of Agriculture shall prepare a report that specifies the actions taken by counties, compensation and financial assistance [paid] provided by counties and [financial assistance] grants provided to counties under the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program, and shall submit the report to the Legislative Assembly and post the report on the department’s website for public access.

(6) The [State Department of Agriculture] department may use moneys in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established under ORS  610.155 to pay expenses incurred in administering the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program.