

Testimony SB 471
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Chair Golden, and committee members, I am John Williams, Co-chair of the Oregon Cattleman's Association Wolf Committee. I am here to support the passage of SB 471. This money is important because the wolf impact on rancher continues to expand across the state. Even though the official minimum population only increased two, the evidence says this number drastically underestimates the actual number of wolves in Oregon. Since that number was published there have been two additional packs found in Wallowa County and one more batch of wolves in central Oregon. More importantly wolves have spread throughout the state. Ranchers in many areas are reporting problems due to wolves in or near their cattle. AND they have found wolf tracks or have game camera pictures to back up their claims.

Moving to hard numbers there were 74 confirmed/probable investigations in 2022, this is up from 49 in 21.

Cattle loss from confirmed/probable kills increased by 50% in 2022.

Over 100 livestock were confirmed killed or injured by wolves in 2022. 73 of those were cattle. The value of the cattle losses is approximately \$80,000.

ODFW map shows 13 counties that have some presence of wolf activity. My information tells me that as many as 28 counties had wolf activity during the year.

Wolves are no longer just in northeastern and Southwestern Oregon. They are all over the state except in the NW metro area.

All this shows that we are seeing a massive increase of where wolves are found in Oregon, increasing depredations, increasing investigations, increasing losses and economic problems for Ranchers. This added money to the fund is needed to help ranchers survive, not fully cover their losses, just survive.

The wolf compensation fund covers “confirmed or probable” kills plus missing livestock and non-lethal. Ranchers are only receiving a small percent of their missing livestock. In 2021 I estimated that over 650 livestock worth over \$750,000 were missing at the end of the year, those numbers are bigger this year. A very small percent of those are even turned in for compensation payment and when they do, the check received is only a small percent of the value due to a lack of money.

Last, the compensation that ranchers receive in no way covers the real losses they are having. It doesn't cover the 10% loss of conception rate, a 60 to 100 lb. loss of calf wt., a 90 lb. loss of cow wt. during summer, or a massive increase in management costs.

Lastly, these depredation numbers are only the tip of the iceberg. In the late 1990's we were told by Carter Neimeyer, wolf expert, that wolves only need 2 things... an adequate food base and tolerant people. The food base is there for now, the tolerance of those ranchers that have been dealing with wolves is very

low. Most ranchers don't even ask for a depredation investigation because they don't feel it is worth it. With the additional \$800,000 more of those ranchers might participate in the compensation program.

Again, I support SB 471 and ask for your vote on this bill.