

Greetings, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith and other members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on spending priorities for the State of Oregon. My name is Troy Michaels and I am a livestock producer in Southern Douglas County. I'm writing to encourage an expanded contribution to the Wolf Compensation Fund through House Bill 2631 and the restoration of Predator Control Funding through Senate Bill 5509. As a lifelong sheep rancher, I am fully aware of and have personally felt the impact of predators on my operation. Beyond the death of the animal, and its economic value, there is weight loss on the rest of the mothers and their babies, a reduction in birthing rates and additional time and labor dealing with all of the associated issues that come along with depredation. We've used a variety of non-lethal methods like fencing, llamas and guard dogs. And we've used lethal controls as well. Experience has taught me that I need a variety of tools in my tool box to deal with the presence of predators. Your support of the funding for these Bills goes beyond the impact to me personally. As wolves expand to every corner of our state, the acreage of resource lands that have been used by cattle, sheep and goats to produce protein for human consumption will be significantly reduced. This reduction comes at a time when we should be expanding our agricultural productivity to produce food for the estimated 9 billion people that will inhabit our planet by 2050. Additionally, managed grasslands with a high organic matter content sequester carbon from the atmosphere, which helps to combat climate change. I submit to you that agriculture is part of the solution, please do not remove us from the equation. Thank you for your time and your consideration of funding House Bill 2631 and Senate Bill 5509.