



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

February 27, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in opposition of SB 777– Relating to the depredation of livestock

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Humane World for Animals (formerly The Humane Society of the United States) and our members and supporters in Oregon, I am writing in opposition to SB 777, which proposes compensation multipliers of seven times fair market value for cow calves and yearlings, sheep and goats and three times fair market value for other cows who are confirmed or deemed probably killed or injured by wolves; and the –1 amendment, which would apply a compensation multiplier of five times fair market value for cows, sheep, and goats who are confirmed or deemed probably killed or injured by wolves. These multipliers could make the robust use of effective, non-lethal conflict prevention measures seem less financially worthwhile for livestock owners.

Livestock go missing for many reasons, including severe weather, disease, and birthing problems, especially in rugged terrain.¹ Indeed, livestock-wolf conflicts are rare in Oregon and in every jurisdiction where they live.² For example, in 2023, wolves were confirmed to have killed or injured fewer than 0.007% of the cattle and sheep living in Oregon.³ For the small number of producers who experience losses, it is undoubtedly a very difficult experience. However, compensation is available, and making the assumption that missing livestock are losses caused by wolves, without evidence, compounds animosity toward wolves that may be misplaced, and is a disservice to both livestock producers and conservation efforts. Active and regular monitoring of herds, which is considered best practice in areas of wolf activity, should reduce or eliminate missing livestock.⁴

Furthermore, these high multipliers are unfair to those livestock owners who dedicate time, effort, and financial resources to proactive wolf-livestock conflict deterrents, which prevent injuries and losses of livestock to wolves. Non-lethal, proactive range management and husbandry techniques, such as low-stress livestock handling, range riding, carcass removal, and others, can be very effective and economically advantageous in the long term when used adaptively and consistently, saving the lives of both livestock animals and Oregon's recovering wolf population.⁵ Financially assisting livestock producers with these tools should be the focus of limited resources rather than greatly multiplying the fair market value of injured or lost livestock.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee not to move SB 777 forward.



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Thank you,

Story Warren
Wildlife Protection Program Manager
Humane World for Animals

¹ The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that wolves have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries," https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/HSUS-Wolf-Livestock-6.Mar_.19Final.pdf (2019); Peter Kareiva et al., "A new era of wolf management demands better data and a more inclusive process," *Conservation Science and Practice* n/a, no. n/a (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.12821>, <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/csp2.12821>.

² Ibid.

³ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2024). Oregon wolf conservation and management 2023 annual report. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Salem, OR. https://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/oregon_wolf_program/2023_Annual_Wolf_Report_4-2-24.pdf; United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Northwest Regional Field Office. (2024). 2024 Oregon annual statistical bulletin. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Oregon/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/2024/OR_ANN_2024.pdf.

⁴ Andelt, W. F. (1996). Carnivores. In P. R. Krausman (Ed.), *Rangeland Wildlife* (pp. 133-155). Society for Range Management; Bergstrom, B. J. (2017). Carnivore conservation: shifting the paradigm from control to coexistence. *Journal of Mammalogy*, 98(1), 1-6; Eklund, A., López-Bao, J. V., Tourani, M., Chapron, G., & Frank, J. (2017). Limited evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce livestock predation by large carnivores. *Scientific reports*, 7(1), 2097; Lennox, R. J., Gallagher, A. J., Ritchie, E. G., & Cooke, S. J. (2018). Evaluating the efficacy of predator removal in a conflict-prone world. *Biological Conservation*, 224, 277-289; Parks, M., & Messmer, T. (2016). Participant perceptions of Range Rider Programs operating to mitigate wolf-livestock conflicts in the western United States. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 40(3), 514-524; Santiago-Avila, F. J., Cornman, A. M., & Treves, A. (2018). Killing wolves to prevent predation on livestock may protect one farm but harm neighbors. *PLoS One*, 13(1), e0189729; Stone, S. A., Breck, S. W., Timberlake, J., Haswell, P. M., Najera, F., Bean, B. S., & Thornhill, D. J. (2017). Adaptive use of nonlethal strategies for minimizing wolf-sheep conflict in Idaho. *Journal of Mammalogy*, 98(1), 33-44; Treves, A., & Karanth, K. U. (2003). Human-carnivore conflict and perspectives on carnivore management worldwide. *Conservation biology*, 17(6), 1491-1499; Treves, A., Kropfel, M., & McManus, J. (2016). Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 14(7), 380-388.

⁵ E.g., Louchouart, N. X., & Treves, A. (2023). Low-stress livestock handling protects cattle in a five-predator habitat. *PeerJ*, 11, e14788.