



February 4, 2026

## **Testimony Submitted to the House Revenue Committee**

**Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke, Walters, and Members of the Committee:**

My name is Diana Wirth, President of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, and I am writing today on behalf of our membership to express strong support for HB 4134, which dedicates a portion of transient lodging tax revenue to the Oregon Department of Agriculture for deposit in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund.

For those of us who live and work in rural Oregon, coexistence with wildlife—especially wolves—is not theoretical. It is a daily reality. Ranching, farming, and working lands communities value healthy ecosystems, but the costs of living with wolves fall disproportionately on the families and operations most directly affected. When livestock, horses, or working dogs are lost to wolf depredation, the impacts extend far beyond market value. These losses create financial strain, operational disruption, and ongoing uncertainty for producers already operating on thin margins.

The ODA Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program plays a critical role in helping counties reduce wolf–livestock conflicts and support producers dealing with wolf-related losses. It complements the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan by ensuring that compensation is paired with proactive, nonlethal conflict-reduction tools—tools that only work when funding is stable and predictable.

The Legislature took an important step forward with the passage of SB 777 in 2025, strengthening Oregon's commitment to wolf compensation and coexistence. But without a reliable, long-term funding mechanism, those commitments remain incomplete. HB 4134 provides exactly that: a durable, dependable funding source that allows counties and producers to plan ahead, respond quickly to depredation events, and invest in prevention.

The benefits of wolf depredation compensation programs are clear:

- **Financial Assistance:** Compensation helps producers recover from losses caused by wolf depredation, reducing the economic burden on rural families.
- **Conflict Mitigation:** By supporting producers after losses occur, these programs reduce tensions and promote coexistence between wolves and livestock operations.
- **Preventive Measures:** Funding supports nonlethal tools—such as fencing, range riders, and guard animals—that reduce the risk of future conflicts and protect both livestock and wildlife.

HB 4134 also advances broader statewide priorities, including wildlife connectivity, invasive species management, wildfire risk reduction, and rural workforce development. Healthy landscapes, working lands, and strong rural communities are interconnected. By modestly increasing the transient lodging tax and dedicating a portion of those funds to conservation, wildfire prevention, and wolf depredation compensation, HB 4134 ensures that the costs of conservation are shared more equitably. The public benefits of wildlife conservation should not come at the expense of rural communities alone.

For these reasons, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association respectfully asks for your support of HB 4134. This bill provides meaningful, long-term support for rural Oregon and fulfills commitments the state has already made. Thank you for your leadership and for your thoughtful consideration.

Diana Wirth, Oregon Cattlemen's Association President