

# AOC ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES

<b>Date:</b>	February 27, 2026
<b>To:</b>	Senator Anthony Broadman, Chair Senator Mike McLane, Vice Chair Members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
<b>From:</b>	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Branden Pursinger
<b>Subject:</b>	<u>Section 2 (3)(c)(C) of House Bill 4134</u> – Support

The Association of Oregon Counties offers this letter in **support of section 2 (3)(c)(C) of House Bill 4134.**

In the early 2000s, Oregon’s Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) initiated development of a state Wolf Conservation and Management Plan – known simply as the Wolf Plan. They appointed a 14 member committee to oversee this work and over a three year period, the plan was drafted with input from a wide variety of stakeholders and the public. That plan was adopted by the ODFW Commission in 2005 with the purpose to “ensure the conservation of gray wolves as required by Oregon law while protecting the social and economic interests of all Oregonians.”

In the wolf plan, the ODFW Commission acknowledged the ranching and farming industries as important components to the overall state economy and as such wanted to find ways to address conflicts between wolves and livestock.

The Wildlife Policy (ORS 496.012) directs ODFW to manage wildlife populations at optimum levels and in a manner consistent with the primary uses of the lands and waters of the state. ORS 496.004 defines “optimum level” as “...wildlife population levels that provide self-sustaining species as well as taking, nonconsumptive, and recreational opportunities”. In addition, ORS 610.055 directs that appropriate measures must be taken to assist farmers, ranchers and others in resolving wildlife damage, and that federal, state, county and local government should cooperate in efforts to control wildlife damage. In the case of damage, wildlife is defined to mean fish, wild birds, amphibians, reptiles, feral swine (as defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture) and other wild mammals (ORS 496.004). Combined, these policies mandate that the wolf Plan effectively address wolf-livestock conflict at a variety of scales, from industry-wide to individual producers.

In 2008 the first wolf pack was reestablished in Oregon and by 2010 there were 14 known wolves residing in Oregon. In response to these 14 known wolves in Oregon, the Legislature passed in 2011 by a unanimous vote in both chambers HB 3560. That bill directed Oregon’s Department of Agriculture to establish a wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program. ORS 610.150 states, impacted ranchers are eligible for depredation compensation as long as their county has an established wolf committee. This committee is made up of 1 Commissioner, 2 livestock owners, 2 wolf conservationists, and 2 members of the business committee. Statute also states funds will be made available to assist counties in compensating individuals who suffer “loss, injury, or missing livestock due to wolf depredation.” Finally, financial assistance is allocated to the county to people who implement

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livestock management or nonlethal wolf control techniques. These techniques could include but are not limited to range riders, spotlighting, pasture monitoring, air cannons, drones, and carcass removal. Of the grant money requested, statute requires a minimum of 30% is required to be put towards these nonlethal measures.

2012 was the first year this program was up and running. 8 counties were eligible for the funding and although all 8 received funds for nonlethal measures, 1 county was awarded funds to compensate for livestock death, injury or missing as a result. In 2024, 10 counties were awarded funds to compensate ranchers for death, injury or missing livestock as a result of wolves and 13 requested and received funds for livestock management or nonlethal actions.

Today, 18 of Oregon's 36 counties have a wolf depredation committee and are eligible for grants to reimburse the rancher as well as local nonlethal deterrence measures.

**AOC is in support of providing dedicated funds to the State Department of Agriculture for deposit into the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund, found in Section 2 (3)(c)(C) of HB 4134.**

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