



February 15, 2024

TO: Members of the House Resources and Conservation Committee

### H485

The Idaho Cattle Association (ICA) is the official voice for all segments of the beef industry. We are dedicated to representing seedstock breeders, commercial operators and cattle feeders. ICA is unique in that members are located in every corner of Idaho. The ICA would urge your **SUPPORT** of H485 that would create a state level livestock depredation fund for producers that experience losses from wolves and grizzly bears.

H485 would provide relief to ranchers who incur losses from wolves and grizzly bears. Currently, the Office of Species and Conservation applies for a federal grant through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services that has historically provided relief to ranchers for wolf depredations and for non-lethal prevention. However, the funding that is being provided by this federal grant is continually diminishing and does not provide any relief for grizzly bears or for non-lethal measures against grizzly bears.

Livestock interactions with predators continue to be significant across rural Idaho. In 2023, there were confirmed depredations in Camas, Custer, Elmore, Gem, Idaho, Lemhi, Valley and Washington counties. If grizzly bears were added to the depredation fund and investigations occurred there would likely be producers affected in north Idaho and eastern Idaho. More importantly, is the fact that these depredations only account for those animals that could be discovered and investigated in a timely manner. There are likely many more that are not investigated because they occur in allotments or pastures that producers do not access each day. However, the evidence of depredations due to a predator is only a fraction of the damage that has likely occurred when predators enter a cattle herd. Ranchers continually confirm that wolves and grizzly bears in livestock herds also contribute to lower pregnancy rates, weight loss and lack of docility in animals. These economic losses are not compensated but realistically occur and are shouldered by the producer.

H485 would create a fund that is available to compensate livestock producers for losses due to wolves and grizzly bears to back fill funding that is being lost from federal sources. Additionally, it would allocate a portion of the funding for conflict prevention and education. H485 would annually appropriate money each year unless the fund reaches its maximum amount, in which case no appropriation would be made.

The ICA urges your **YES** vote on H485.

Sincerely,

Jerry Wroten  
President

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