

# Levy proposes \$1M for wolf-livestock compensation

State has confirmed wolves injured or killed 87 animals so far in 2021

By **GEORGE PAVEN**  
Capital Press

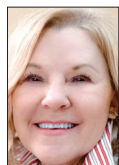
SALEM — An Eastern Oregon legislator wants to significantly increase state funding to reimburse ranchers for dead and missing livestock caused by wolves.

State Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, plans to introduce a bill in the 2022 Legislature that would provide \$1 million over the next biennium for the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance grant program.

The bill comes on behalf of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Sheep Growers Association and Oregon Hunters Association.

"(Producers) didn't ask for these wolves to be brought in," Levy said. "It's a very emotional thing, and it's getting more costly by the day."

The wolf compensation program was created by the Legislature in 2011, and provides grants to counties where wolves are present. Grants may be awarded to cover the losses of dead, injured or missing livestock, as well as nonlethal prevention.



Levy

Ranchers, however, argue the program is woefully underfunded. For 2020, ODA awarded \$130,164 split among 12 counties, covering just 37% of all grant requests. In 2019, counties were awarded \$251,529, or 58% of all requests.

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, requested \$800,000 for the program in the 2021 Legislature. Lawmakers instead approved a one-time allocation of \$400,000, on top of what is



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File  
**A male wolf from the Wenaha Pack was fitted with a radio collar on Aug. 4, 2010. State Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, plans to introduce a bill in the 2022 Legislature that would provide \$1 million over the next biennium for wolf depredation compensation and assistance.**

already provided in ODA's budget.

Jonathan Sandau, a special assistant to ODA Director Alexis Taylor, said the agency anticipates having a little more than \$800,000 total to compensate producers for wolf-livestock conflicts during the biennium, including federal grants from the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service.

Despite the boost, ranchers say it is still not enough as they face more instances of wolves attacking and killing their animals.

Oregon has at least 173 wolves scattered across the state, according to the most recent estimate from the Oregon Department of

Fish and Wildlife. So far in 2021, ODFW has confirmed 87 animals killed or injured by wolves, including 51 cattle, 28 sheep, six goats and two guard dogs. That is up by more than double over 2020, when 32 animals were attacked or killed by wolves — 28 cattle, two llamas and two guard dogs.

Levy said the estimated cost for dead and missing livestock, as of Nov. 6, was \$780,000 and that number is expected to increase as ranchers finish moving their livestock out of the mountains and down into winter pasture.

Rodger Huffman, a Union County rancher and member of the OCA wolf committee, said the compensation program likely will not cover counties' grant requests.

"More tools are needed," he said. "If more tools are not provided in management, then more money is needed for compensation."

What's more, Huffman said the program does not

compensate ranchers for other hidden costs they suffer due to wolves. Livestock might not be directly killed or injured, but have lower birth rates or gain less weight if they are stressed by predators.

"There's cost in the cattle production side," Huffman said. "Then the other big cost is the producer cost to be out there trying to prevent the depredations."

Sandau, with ODA, said applications for ranchers to receive compensation for 2021 depredations will be made available in February 2022. With the \$400,000 boost in funding, he said they should be able to fulfill more requests than they have in past years.

"We talk to stakeholder groups and county governments, and with the available funds make the best investment that we can," Sandau said. "With potentially more depredation requests for 2021 in the granting cycle for 2022, we'll see how it all balances out."

## Audit finds room for improvement at state law enforcement training agency

By **WHITNEY WOODWORTH**  
Salem Statesman Journal

SALEM — The agency tasked with training and certifying Oregon law enforcement is limited in its ability to hold officers accountable for misconduct and lacks oversight of field training, according to an audit released Wednesday, Dec. 1, by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office.

Every newly hired police officer in Oregon must attend a four-month training at the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in Salem. The agency is responsible for regulating all public safety professionals in the state,

including county, city and tribal police officers and city and county corrections officers.

Officers who fail to meet moral fitness standards may face decertification by DPSST.

But the audit found that while the agency has improved its procedures to hold officers accountable, local control, narrowly-defined administrative rules and gaps in the certification review process limit its ability to hold more officers accountable.

"As a result, officers whose conduct is worthy of decertification may go undetected or unaddressed," auditors noted in the report.

The audit pointed to, as an example, the 57 officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths from 2004 to 2018 involving the Portland Police Bureau. Of these 57, only one officer's actions may have met the standards for a DPSST professional standards review.

The audit also found that while the agency has developed training that complies with state laws and includes an evidence-based curriculum, only a small portion of law enforcement officers have received this training and DPSST's ability to train officers further evaporates once they leave the academy and go into the field.

"The agency's ability to

provide police training and to certify and decertify officers is hindered by staffing and technology constraints," auditors said.

The audit was conducted with the purpose of examining how the agency responsible for regulating officers approached police training and accountability.

"Recent years have been marked by much-needed attention to racial injustice, inequity, and the actions of law enforcement agencies," auditors said in the report. "As the debate on police reform intensifies and with public trust in law enforcement waning, it raises questions about the ability of these agencies and the State of Oregon to

hold officers accountable for misconduct."

The audit singled out George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis police officer in 2020 and the 100 days of protest in Portland that followed as driving the calls for police reform.

Each state has an officer standards and training commission to establish standards and training requirements. Most oversee the certification, decertification and ongoing training for officers.

Since 1961, Oregon's system has evolved into DPSST to provide basic training, certify officers and monitor compliance with professional standards.

The audit noted that the

DPSST board does not have control over law enforcement agency operations and instead deals with individual officers.

"Holding local LEAs (law enforcement officers) accountable is ultimately up to publicly elected leaders, including city and county officials," auditors said.

Currently, 5,620 police officers, 20,935 private security professionals and 6,974 firefighters are certified through the agency.

The DPSST board can deny or revoke an officer's certification. In 2019, 71 certifications were revoked. Last year, 49 certifications were revoked, four were denied and two were suspended.

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