

CO Compensation Testimony

Thank you vice chair and committee for offering the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Matthew Collins and I am acting on behalf of the Western Landowners Alliance, a landowner-led organization that advances policies and practices to support working lands, connected landscapes, and native species in the west.

Wildlife in the West depends on a patchwork of public and private lands that connect large swaths of open space. Working lands stitch together the fabric of this open space, providing essential connectivity for species, food, fiber, and economic viability to rural communities in the West, Colorado and Chaffee County where I reside.

As the Working Wild Challenge Interim Coordinator with the Western Landowners alliance, I work with livestock producers and diverse groups to advance practices and economic policies that support resilient, biodiverse working lands and effective management practices that reduce wildlife conflicts and enable people, livestock, and wildlife to thrive.

Compensation programs are essential to maintaining the economic viability of operations who will be affected by wolf depredation in this state. CPW's draft wolf restoration and management plan includes options for a compensation ratio and itemized production losses. While the plan does not meet the full range of costs that may be incurred, it is the most comprehensive compensation plan in the West to date. This robust plan needs robust funding.

As a result, The Western Landowners Alliance is strongly recommending that this committee advance Senate Bill 255, to create the wolf depredation compensation fund within the Colorado State General Fund.

Thank you for your time and for your efforts to provide this funding.