

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger, Chair
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee

Dear Chair Granger, Chair Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Ranking Member Collins:

The undersigned organizations write to request your support for full funding of \$15 million annually through Fiscal Year 2025 for the “Grant Program for Losses of Livestock Due to Depredation by Federally Protected Species (Grant Program)” (7 USC § 8355). We find common ground in our work to reduce human-wildlife conflict and its impacts while supporting working landscapes that underpin rural economies and provide crucial wildlife habitat. We envision landscapes where people, livestock, and wildlife all thrive, where effective management practices reduce conflicts and economic solutions support resilient, biodiverse working lands.

Given the expanding range of many large carnivores, including reintroduction efforts throughout their historic range, the need for additional wildlife-livestock conflict prevention work and livestock depredation compensation support for producers is rapidly increasing. At the same time, federal funding to support non-lethal conflict prevention work and supplement state-level livestock depredation compensation funds has remained relatively flat, and nowhere near enough to meet the demand. This is evident in the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Project Grant Program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) authorized in 2009, which continues to receive only \$1 million annually in funding. This program provides grants to state agencies to administer non-lethal conflict prevention techniques, and supplement existing state programs that compensate producers for livestock loss, but is often nearly fully expended in only a handful of western states. Recognizing that this annual appropriation falls well short of the need, Congress authorized the Grant Program in the America’s Conservation Enhancement Act of 2020.

Working lands are where people and nature come together. Durable conservation requires wildlife management strategies that are informed by and supported by those living in wild and working landscapes. Building that support requires funding on the ground, and it also requires capacity in state and federal agencies. Added capacity provided through the Grant Program to implement non-lethal conflict reduction methods will benefit both rural communities and wildlife, bringing us closer to our vision of healthy, connected landscapes through support for land stewards.

Sincerely,

American Sheep Industry Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club
Centennial Valley Association
Colorado Wool Growers Association
Defenders of Wildlife
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission
National Wildlife Federation

Natural Resources Defense Council
Northeast Washington Wolf-cattle Collaborative
Madison Valley Ranchlands Group
Public Lands Council
Rio Blanco Stockgrowers
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Upper Green River Cattlemen's Association
Western Landowners Alliance