

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SSB 5193

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning gray wolf conflict management.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Smith, Roach, Honeyford and Delvin; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

**Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources**

**Background:** Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Generally. DFW serves as manager of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, DFW must protect, perpetuate, and establish the basic rules and regulations governing the harvest of fish and wildlife.

Wildlife Damage Compensation. The Legislature has authorized DFW to manage a wildlife damage compensation program that compensates commercial crop owners for damage from elk and deer. The program also compensates commercial livestock owners for damage from cougars, wolves, and bears.

Specifically, a commercial livestock owner may receive compensation for cattle, sheep, and horses injured or killed by bears, wolves, or cougars. DFW may only pay claims:

- using amounts specifically appropriated for this purpose; and
- up to statutorily specified amounts per animal.

Under the livestock damage compensation program, commercial livestock include cattle, sheep, and horses held or raised by a person for sale.

Personalized License Plates. A personalized license plate allows the registered vehicle owner to request the combination of letters or numbers to be included on the license plate. In addition to other annual vehicle registration fees, the owner of a personalized license plate must pay an initial registration fee of \$42 and \$32 for each renewal.

Revenue from personalized license plate fees is distributed for the following wildlife management purposes:

- \$10 to the state Wildlife Account for the management of resources associated with nonconsumptive wildlife uses;

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- \$2 for wildlife rehabilitation; and
- the remainder to the state Wildlife Account for the protection and management of nongame species including protected and endangered species, raptors and song birds, and specialized habitat types.

**Summary:** Establishes a Wildlife Account-Based Funding Mechanism for Livestock Damage Caused by Wolves. Authorizes DFW to pay not more than \$50,000 per year from the state Wildlife Account for claims and assessment costs for injury to or the loss of livestock caused by wolves. DFW may also accept and spend funds from other sources to address damage to livestock or other property, consistent with the requirements of that funding source.

Any unspent amounts of the \$50,000 at the end of the fiscal year are transferred to the newly created Wolf-livestock Conflict Account. This account is non-appropriated and may be used for mitigation, assessment, and payments for livestock damage caused by wolves. DFW may also deposit grants, gifts, or donations into the account.

DFW must maintain a list of claims for livestock damage caused by wolves, organized chronologically based on the date of the wolf predation. DFW must pay claims in the order they appear on the list as funding becomes available through annual Wildlife Account funding or other sources. This includes authority and direction to pay claims for livestock damage that occurred in previous biennia.

Adds an Additional \$10 to Personalized License Plate Registration Fees. \$10 is added to the initial and renewal registration fee for a personalized license plate. The added revenue is provided to the state Wildlife Account for the protection and management of nongame species including protected and endangered species, raptors and song birds, and specialized habitat types.

Modifies Payment Eligibility and Valuation. A livestock owner may receive compensation for damage to cattle, sheep, or horses regardless of whether they are involved in commercial agriculture or the animal is specifically raised for sale.

Compensation provided for damage to livestock may not exceed the animal's market value, replacing the specific statutory caps per animal under current law. Additionally, the Fish and Wildlife Commission must adopt rules setting limits and conditions for expenditures on claims, assessments, and mitigating actions for livestock as well as crop and other property damage.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	28	21	
House	96	2	(House amended)
Senate	43	1	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 28, 2013.