

STATE CAPITOL
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March 6, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Tangipa, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
Subcommittee No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: FY 2026-27 Budget Request for Wolf-Livestock Compensation Program Funding

Dear Chair Gabriel, Vice Chair Tangipa, and Chair Bennett,

We respectfully request \$32.8 million dollars in funding to support a comprehensive wolf-livestock compensation program within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). These investments are necessary to uphold California's long-standing commitment to supporting ranchers and agricultural producers and conserving our wildlife.

Wolves have devastated agricultural communities, leaving dead and maimed livestock, inflicting severe economic loss, and creating chronic stress for families and communities living in fear. Best available science and on-the-ground experience show that investing in a robust and comprehensive program designed to promote coexistence and proactively minimize conflicts between people and wildlife at the statewide and regional level produces healthier wildlife populations, and result in a safer environment for both people and wildlife.

Tools such as improved animal husbandry, electric fencing, livestock guardian animals, attractant management, and other deterrents have been shown to reduce conflicts and depredations when deployed thoughtfully and in partnership with producers and communities. However, without meaningful state investment, many producers are left to shoulder the financial burden alone while trying to defend their livelihoods. These

approaches are often more cost-effective over time than purely reactive responses, and they support healthier ecosystems and agricultural production.

CDFW needs adequate resources to help ranchers with the impact of wolves, including providing funding for compensation to livestock owners for the prevention of livestock predation, for the stressful presence of wolves near livestock, and for loss due to wolf predation, and investments in the science and technology to track the location and expansion of the wolf population in our state.

California asked communities to accept the return of wolves and the presence of other apex predators. It is now the state's responsibility to ensure those communities are not left alone to bear the consequences. California must invest meaningfully in wildlife coexistence. Therefore, we respectfully request inclusion of the following in the FY 2026-27 budget:

- Wolf-Livestock Coexistence Program and Compensation – CDFW
 - \$25 million one-time for a wolf-livestock compensation fund
 - \$500,000 ongoing for the UC Berkeley Wolf Project
 - \$300,000 ongoing for UCCE/UCANR extension support
 - \$1 million one-time for CDFW helicopter and collaring capacity
 - \$1 million ongoing for additional CDFW staffing dedicated to wolf coexistence
 - \$3 million ongoing for CDFW rapid-response and wolf management activities
 - \$2 million ongoing for county wildlife coexistence liaisons

These amounts reflect the scale of the need as documented by CDFW and are supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders, including wildlife protection and conservation organizations, ranching and agricultural representatives, tribes, local governments, and community-based groups.

California should act with intention and urgency to address the impacts of increased populations of apex predators.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you require any further information or would like to discuss this request in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Nickens in my office at (916) 319-2011.

Sincerely,



HEATHER HADWICK
Assemblymember, District 1



MEGAN DAHLE
Senator, District 1



JAMES GALLAGHER

Assemblymember, District 3



TOM LACKEY

Assemblymember, District 34

Cc:

Christine Miyashiro, Assembly Budget Sub Committee No. 4

Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Caucus Office of Policy and Budget

John Fitzpatrick, Assembly Republican Caucus Office of Policy and Budget