

**February 8, 2023**

**Budget and Tax Committee; Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**SB 310: Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund**

**FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon chairman and members of the committee. My name is Alyssa Dangel and I am here to testify on senate bill 310. This bill would greatly benefit many animals. It would also help so many people.

Bears living in areas near human settlements or around constant human activity often come to rely on food that is accidentally provided by humans, most often during spring and fall. As more people live in rural areas, rural areas become suburban areas and more buildings are encroaching onto sparse forest areas where bears are living. Bears are now encroaching onto these suburban areas and eating the trash, among other things. To vote yes on SB310 would be helping stop bears coming into conflict with people.

My family and I have had experiences not unlike bears attacking livestock, where a fox was attacking our chickens. The way to solve the problem with the bears is the same way we solved our problem with the fox. We invested in a fence around our chicken coop. This is relevant because putting a fence around our chicken coop saved the chickens and putting a fence around livestock will save them from bears!

The same fox that was killing our chickens was eventually hit by a car. That didn't solve the problem because another fox just moved in. It is the exact same with the bears. The only thing you do when you shoot a bear that is harming your livestock is prolonging the inevitable; having another bear move back in and killing a poor bear who didn't need to die. This bill would not only save the livestock that are being slaughtered by the bears, but also save those beautiful creatures. The logic is evident. If we continue the way we are going, more needless deaths to living creatures, who deserve life and to not to be killed.

Historically, American black bears occupied the majority of North America's forested regions. Today, they are primarily limited to small, forested areas that are most times near human settlements. The reason bears attack livestock is because they see food that is near them and easy to get. However, they would not be able to attack the livestock if there were fences or other means of protection.

The bears do not only harm the livestock, but harm crops as well. Bears trample the crops and cause a poor harvest. But how will shooting one bear solve that problem? Putting fences or other deterrents around the crops will be much more beneficial towards keeping bears out of the crops. This way the harvest will be more prosperous; also, the fence will keep other animals out of the crops as well.

Save livestock, save agriculture, save bears. Please vote yes on Senate Bill 310.