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WDFW already has a budget shortfall. The huge outlay of taxpayer dollars spent on killing wolves on public lands that are unsuitable for grazing cattle, just so a livestock operator can improve his bottom line, is absurd. The cost of killing wolves far exceeds the value of the occasional cow or calf they kill. If WDFW required livestock operators to reimburse the department the expenses incurred in killing wolves, it would alleviate some of the department's budget shortfall. If WDFW adopted this policy, livestock operators would be much more amenable to writing off cattle predations as part of the cost of doing business on public lands—just like they do for weather, birthing, and illness-related livestock losses. Adopting such a policy would be a win/win for WDFW and for the state's endangered wolves, and would encourage livestock operators to use better judgment in deciding where they can safely graze their cattle.

What I propose is the best solution to Washington's vexing problem of predator and livestock conflict. If livestock operators want WDFW to kill wolves and other predators on public lands after all non-lethal measures have been tried and exhausted, then they must reimburse WDFW the full cost of doing it.