

February 15, 2023

Environment and Transportation Committee

House Bill: Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Katherine Dangel and I am here to testify on house bill 378. House Bill 378 will help with conflict prevention between bears and people. Bears have been harming livestock and crops despite numerous attempts to stop this. Now we see a permanent solution. This could be funding farmers to help protect crops. It could be funding people to use bear-proof trash cans. It could also be preventing bears from entering suburban areas, or areas that have had previous conflicts with bears. This is our permanent solution.

I know from experience that killing an animal won't solve the problem. For a while a fox was attacking our chickens. Eventually that fox got hit by a car, but another fox just moved in right after him. The only permanent solution that my family could find was to put a fence around our Chicken coop. It is the same way with the bears. We need to focus on a permanent solution, not a temporary one.

We also should try to protect bears. Research has shown that bears are intelligent, and care and grieve for members of their family. Bears are also very good parents. They have been shown to be very protective of their young. One of the few reasons that Bears are aggressive to people is if they believe that they would hurt their cubs. Bears also help the environment. They spread plant and berry seeds through their excrement and they also help maintain local prey populations.

And this won't just help bears. This will also help animals like chickens, who are threatened by bears. Sometimes bears can go after livestock. Killing these bears will not solve the problem, because another bear will just move in. However with House Bill 378, funding could make a permanent solution. In 2015 we lost \$23,800 to bears trying to find food. This could have been saved by preventative measures.

In summary, this bill will save money and animal lives. This will create a permanent and a more peaceful solution. So please, vote yes on House Bill 378.