

2/17/16

February 16, 2016

2016 Idaho Legislature
Boise, Idaho

Dear Legislator,

I thank you for the opportunity to testify by letter in favor of a bill addressing the injustices of the Idaho Game Depredation system. I testify both as an individual farmer and rancher and also on behalf of my constituents in Idaho County as I am one of the Idaho County Commissioners.

As an individual farmer and rancher, I would like to tell you that elk and deer have destroyed our crops of fall canola, significantly reducing the yield while at the same time no just compensation was received. There are hay fields that I would love to seed to alfalfa, but I do not even try because I know that the deer will feed on it in such numbers as to kill the crop. It is extremely frustrating for the land owner, who pays taxes, who fertilizes and sprays his fields at his own economic cost, to then create habitat for a group of animals that he has no control over, but which cost him economic loss.

As a County Commissioner, I would like to say that I find it unjust that the State owns the game on the land, takes revenue from the game, controls the game population and yet to a very significant degree that same game population is supported by economic inputs of the private land owner. If the State wants to own the game, then it needs to make just compensation to the land owner for economic damages. I do not believe that the existing Depredation system is anywhere near establishing justice in this regard.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Mark Frei
Idaho County Commissioner
139 Case Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
208-507-0171