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**State Government, Elections &  
Information Technology Committee**

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**HB 1465**

**Brief Description:** Exempting from public disclosure certain information regarding reports on wolf depredations.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Short, Lytton, Kretz, Koster, Schmick and Fitzgibbon.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Exempts from public disclosure certain personal identifying information of persons involved in preventative measures regarding wolf interactions, or responding to reported wolf depredations.

**Hearing Date:** 2/1/17

**Staff:** Sean Flynn (786-7124).

**Background:**

*Wolf Management Information.* The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) operates under a legislative mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the state's wildlife. Some of the DFW's responsibilities include managing hunting and fishing activities, and protecting endangered species.

The DFW has listed the gray wolf as an endangered species, and has adopted a wolf conservation and management plan to promote wolf recovery, as well as livestock and wildlife protection. The plan includes preventative measures to control wolf predation, including non-lethal and lethal actions. The DFW monitors wolf activity in the state and must publish on its website all reported interactions with wolves and other predatory animals, including depredations on humans, pets, and livestock. The DFW is authorized to pay owners who report the loss of livestock due to depredations by wolves and other predatory animals.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

*Public Records Act.* The Public Records Act (PRA) requires state and local agencies to make their written records available to the public for inspection and copying upon request, unless the information fits into one of the various specific exemptions in the PRA or otherwise provided in law. The stated policy of the PRA favors disclosure and requires narrow application of the listed exemptions.

The PRA exempts from public disclosure certain sensitive fish and wildlife data that is collected and shared with the DFW and other agencies for research and management purposes. The information generally relates to the location of protected species. The exemption does not apply to the reported data regarding interactions with predatory animals, including wolves, that the DFW collects and publishes on its website.

**Summary of Bill:**

Certain information related to persons involved in measures to minimize wolf interactions is exempt from public disclosure. Such information includes the personal identifying information of a pet or livestock owner, or any other person, who is involved in deploying nonlethal preventative measures to minimize wolf interactions, as well as the legal description of that person's home, ranch or farm.

The exemption also protects the information of people involved in reporting and responding to depredations by wolves on pets and livestock. Such information includes the personal identifying information of:

- any person who reports a wolf depredation;
- any owner whose pet or livestock is subject to a wolf depredation, including that owner's family and employees, and the legal description of his or her home, farm or ranch; and
- any DFW employee or contractor who directly responds to a depredation, or assists in the lethal removal of a wolf.

The location of a wolf depredation, in any greater proximity than the wolf pack territory where the depredation occurred, is exempt from disclosure.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.