



Press Release

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Assemblemember Frank Bigelow Introduces Livestock Theft Legislation Cattlemen look to increase penalties for cattle rustling in California

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Members of the California Cattlemen's Association are pleased to sponsor and support Assembly Bill 924, introduced last week by Assemblemember and longtime rancher Frank Bigelow (R-O'Neals), to increase penalties for livestock theft. As California's livestock owners have experienced for decades, the financial loss from animal theft can impact a family ranching operation tremendously and can mean the difference between ending up in the red or in the black in any given year.

"As cattle have become more valuable in recent years, we have seen the problem of theft grow significantly," said CCA President Tim Koopmann, a Bay Area cow-calf producer. "CCA couldn't be more eager to throw our support behind this important legislation in hopes that the passing of this law will make criminals think twice before stealing from hardworking livestock producers. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Assemblemember Bigelow for his attention to this important matter and are proud to partner with him as the sponsor of the bill."

AB 924, if passed, would provide penalty enhancements for those convicted of livestock grand theft based on the total value of the livestock stolen. For example, theft of livestock exceeding a value of \$15,000 will enable a District Attorney to add an additional term to a criminal sentence. The bill will also limit probation for repeat offenders and provides flexibility for a prosecutor to mandate limit jail time for repeat offenders to a minimum of 30 days. The bill would also establish a fine to be paid to the Bureau of Livestock Identification (CDFA) to provide additional funding for future investigations involving livestock theft.

The increasing value of livestock has exponentially increased the rates and severity of cattle rustling. Recent cases have involved grand theft equating to nearly \$40,000. In most cases, those convicted of livestock grand theft receive little to no punishment. This bill will provide the necessary tools for prosecutors to properly penalize persons convicted of livestock theft, especially those with previous convictions.

"As a lifelong rancher and advocate for rural California, I'm honored to partner with the California Cattlemen's Association to protect cattlemen and other livestock producers from livestock theft," Bigelow said. "Since my first day in Sacramento I've been committed to making sure we focus on real world solutions to real world problems and this legislation does just that. I look forward to broad bi-partisan support for this solution-oriented bill and I'm confident it will move successfully through the legislative process."

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Founded in 1917, the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) represents California's \$1.78 billion beef cattle industry on legislative and regulatory affairs and remains the number one voice for the industry today. CCA is an affiliate of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which represents America's cattle farmers and ranchers.

