



February 9, 2012

**Testimony before the House Agriculture and
Natural Resources Committee on HB 4158**

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SUBMITTED BY: IVAN MALUSKA

Chairs Clem and Esquivel,

The Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club urges your opposition to House Bill 4158 regarding lethal control of wolves in Oregon. With nearly 20,000 members across the state, the Sierra Club has worked for years to support the re-establishment wolf populations in the region, including supporting Oregon's groundbreaking Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, as well as the creation of a compensation program for livestock owners who suffer losses due to wolf depredation.

While we accept that under the Oregon's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, some lethal control of wolves may be necessary in rare situations, we oppose HB 4158 and other legislative efforts to overturn a recent stay on an ODFW kill order issued for two wolves in Northeast Oregon's Imnaha pack. Lethal control should truly be the last resort, after livestock owners have exhausted all non-lethal means to prevent depredation. In the case of the Imnaha wolves, the ODFW has been under tremendous political pressure to kill some or all of wolves in the pack, even though it is not clear that all available non-lethal means to prevent livestock depredation related to this pack have been taken.

Further, under the rule revisions made to the state's wolf plan in recent years, all it takes is two confirmed cases of livestock losses to label the depredation 'chronic,' justifying lethal control measures. With Oregon's wolves still on the endangered species list and numbering fewer than thirty animals, we believe the bar must be set much higher than ODFW has established for lethal control to be considered.

While we are not party to the lawsuit that brought an injunction against killing members of the Imnaha wolf pack, we believe that the kill order issued was primarily intended to relieve political pressure on the agency from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and their supporters. Given the repeated efforts during the past three legislative sessions to expand lethal control of Oregon's wolves, today's bill, and expected future legislation, we believe there is likely no way to satisfy some anti-wolf interests until wolves are once again completely exterminated from the state of Oregon.

To the extent that the lawsuit can bring about a better wolf management program that ensures that all non-lethal means are taken before lethal control, we support it and oppose legislative efforts to intervene in the ongoing legal proceeding and potential settlement discussions among the parties which we understand are underway.

The state's new compensation program to fund non-lethal prevention efforts and compensate ranchers for proven wolf related losses, as well as a potential tax credit to further support these efforts, should be allowed to work before the legislature intervenes to resume or expand lethal control of endangered wolves in this state. Again, we urge your opposition to HB 4158.