



May 28, 2013

JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD
Governor

The Honorable Peter Courtney
Senate President
S-201 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Speaker of the House
H-269 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Diane Rosenbaum
Senate Majority Leader
S-223 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Val Hoyle
House Majority Leader
H-295 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Ted Ferrioli
Senate Republican Leader
S-323 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Mike McLane
House Republican Leader
H-395 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Legislative Leadership:

I am pleased to announce that on May 23, 2013 parties involved in an ongoing legal dispute over wolf management in Oregon came to an agreement that will ensure both wolf conservation and protections for livestock owners. The litigation had resulted in a temporary court order that prevented the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) from fully implementing the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, adopted in 2005 as part of an extensive multi-stakeholder public process. The lawsuit challenged the State's authority to kill wolves linked to the depredation of livestock while wolves are listed under the Oregon Endangered Species Act.

After over a year of difficult negotiations, Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, and ODFW agreed that settlement could do more to serve their respective interests than pursuing the zero-sum-game approach of seeing litigation to its very end. I extend my sincere thanks to retired Judge Pamela Abernethy for her assistance in mediating this case, as well as maintaining communication with Oregon's judiciary. Under the provisions of the agreement:

- Livestock owners will implement non-lethal measures to deter wolves from killing livestock, and in the event these measures prove unsuccessful in preventing livestock depredations from rising to a chronic situation, ODFW and individual livestock producers will have lawful means to lethally control wolves;

- ODFW will ensure wolf management is transparent and based on the best science available; and
- Oregonians will be ensured that wolf populations continue to recover and wolves continue to be part of the Oregon landscape while also assuring that livestock owners have reasonable protections.

Implementation of this agreement will take the form of ODFW's immediate issuance of temporary rules followed by full rulemaking by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in the near future. Rules and legislation must both be adopted to ensure the intent of the settlement is met. Taken together, the rules and legislation highlight the importance of undertaking proactive measures to protect livestock from wolves and clarify the pathway for removal of wolves that chronically prey upon livestock despite non-lethal conflict deterrence, including thresholds for when ODFW as well as individual landowners can lethally take wolves while they remain listed under the Oregon Endangered Species Act.

The parties have all agreed to work together to support the negotiated rule language when it comes before the Commission and to work together with Oregon's Legislature to support passage of negotiated legislative language during this session. I also look forward to working with the Legislature and Commission to advance this settlement agreement, which I view to be in Oregon's best interests. I am committed to signing legislation so long as (a) it represents the agreed-upon legislative language reached through settlement, and (b) the Commission has first adopted rules that track the language reached through settlement.

I compliment the parties for their hard work on a very challenging issue and their recognition that finding common ground through multi-party negotiations can lead to more creative, effective, and durable solutions than may be found in a legal opinion from the courts.

Sincerely,



John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor