

## Raszka Shelley

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**From:** Suzanne Fouty <suzannefouty@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2015 8:46 PM  
**To:** Raszka Shelley  
**Cc:** Suzanne Fouty  
**Subject:** HB 3515

*Dear Members of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee:*

*Please kill HB3515.*

*Much money, time, and creative effort has been expended by the citizens of Oregon to plot a new path as it applies to wolves, livestock, and restoration of ecosystems. It is a path that includes the wolf as a partner in restoration. While there are impacts to livestock as a result of wolves, these are impacts that can be minimized by changes in grazing practices on both public and private land.*

*The benefits of a healthy, viable wolf population are enormous. Wolves surprisingly play a key role in improving the water security of Oregon. Without them, our State will continue to struggle during periods of drought and periods of flooding. How so? If Oregon is to recover some of its water security such that we are less vulnerable to variability in weather and changes in climate, then we must have healthy stream-riparian areas. Improved health of these systems requires abundant beaver dams throughout public lands and, where acceptable, on streams the flow through private ground. As beavers build dams, they store water behind the dams and into the valley bottom soils -- water stored like a savings account to be returned to the river and to the people and wildlife and fish that need it during times of drought. These dams also slow water down so that during periods of abundant snow and/or rain, the water spreads out across the valley floors and soaks into the ground and stored so that the river does not flood so high and land is protected. But for beavers to build and maintain their dams they MUST have willows, cottonwoods, aspen and dogwood to use. However, these are also species that elk, deer and livestock like to eat. Enter the contribution from the wolf. Wolves cause elk and deer to move around more and so there is less browse of the willows, cottonwoods, aspen, and dogwood by these animals. This allows these plants to expand, thereby providing food and building materials for beavers. Wolves make ranchers more mindful about their livestock on public land and so better manage them. As a result, livestock pressure on these riparian plants also goes down. Again, this allows the food and building material that beavers need to store water for us to increase. Without wolves, elk and deer and livestock will continue to eat these plants and Oregon will miss an opportunity to become less water stressed.*

*What the response of willows, cottonwoods, and aspen in Yellowstone National Park tells us is that elk and deer must be managed, that they can do as much damage to stream systems as livestock. We all need water and this drought is an important reminder that we need all kinds of partners. We need water and we need the help of beavers to repair our damaged streams systems and store water for us and beavers need the help of wolves. No wolves, then our streams will continue to decline in health and Oregon will be increasing more sensitive to drought and flooding. We must allow for their expansion. Delisting them allows local frustrations to compromise the water security of Oregon. We must not be short-sighted. We must move beyond just thinking of wolves as a livestock issue. The issue is water, water security, healthy stream systems, healthy communities.*

*I urge you to not pass HB3515. This bill is not in the interest of Oregonians, or agriculture, or hunting, or fishing, or wildlife or fish because it would prevent the recovery of our water security. We can adjust to wolves and benefit from them. Instead, I urge the Oregon Legislature to encourage public land managers to alter 19th century grazing practices such that 21st century practices take into account the return of wolves and develop ways of moving livestock in their allotments such that conflicts between livestock and wolves on public lands decrease.*

*Sincerely,*

*Suzanne Fouty*

*Baker City, OR*