

# Cascadia Wildlands

we like it wild.

April 16, 2015

## **Cascadia Wildlands testimony concerning HB 3515 House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Good afternoon Chair Witt and members of the committee,

My name is Nick Cady. I am the Legal Director of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands, a regional non-profit conservation organization representing 12,000 members and supporters. Cascadia Wildlands educates, agitates, and inspires a movement to protect and restore Cascadia's wild ecosystems. We envision vast old-growth forests, rivers full of wild salmon, wolves howling in the backcountry, and vibrant communities sustained by the unique landscapes of the Cascadia bioregion. I'm here today to encourage you to oppose HB 3515.

Cascadia Wildlands was one of the parties that negotiated the Oregon settlement that established a system of rules for wolf management. These rules permit the killing of wolves that deplete on cattle, they compensate livestock producers for losses, they pay ranchers to implement non-lethal preventative measures, and overall have emphasized the implementation of responsible ranching practices that aim to prevent conflict with wolves. Under this settlement, we have seen wolf populations rise, and conflicts with livestock decrease. I believe we currently have 77 wolves in the state, and this past year had the first pack establish itself in the western two-thirds of the state. Wolf recovery is moving along.

HB 3515 would remove wolves from the state endangered species act list and prevent them from ever being listed again in the future. This bill is unnecessary, because in this state we have an agency, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which is tasked with responsibilities towards the state's wildlife. These responsibilities are carried out based upon scientific studies, biological data and information. The listing or de-listing of a species is by law based upon sound scientific and biological data. ODFW is considering a wolf delisting process as we speak. This legislative attempt to inject itself into this process opens a dangerous door and would set a horrible precedent for imperiled species trying to regain a foothold.

I do not believe the legislature wants or needs to become involved in management of every species in this state, and I do not believe ODFW wants to shift their management mandates every year or two based on the state's political whims. We have seen what this has led to on the federal level; legislation delisting wolves has led to years of litigation, further legislation, and gridlock in wolf management. We do not need this in Oregon. The wolf program is working in this state.

There is an old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And one final thing, repealing state listing has no practical management implications on the ground, as wolves will continue to be managed as they have been under the rules. But what delisting could do is disqualify ODFW from receiving federal and other funding that is for the management of listed species.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Nick Cady  
Cascadia Wildlands