

Raszka Shelley

MEASURE HB 3188
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SUBMITTED BY: Robert Klavins

From: Rob Klavins <rk@oregonwild.org>
Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2015 8:50 AM
To: Gallagher Chuck; Raszka Shelley; Rep Witt
Cc: Rep Krieger; Rep Frederick; Rep Barreto; Rep Esquivel; Rep Gorsek; Rep McKeown; Rep McLain; Rep Whitsett; BROWNSCOMBE BRETT E; Rep Kotek
Subject: HB3515: Oregon Wild following up

Chair Witt & Members of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee,

On Thursday evening I watched the Committee hearing on HB's 2050, 3188, 3514, & 3515 from my home near Enterprise, Wallowa County, Oregon. Though dismayed by the controversial agenda, I am writing specifically to follow up on HB3515 and provide some clarity.

Despite regularly raising concerns in appropriate venues, Oregon Wild supported Oregon's wolf plan in 2005. We stood by our agreements when the plan was revised in 2010 and through a legal settlement that was agreed to by ODFW, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, and others in 2013. That settlement was subsequently ratified by this legislature. That plan and all subsequent revisions included the provision that "*Once the conservation population objective [4-breeding pairs for 3-consecutive years] is achieved, the process to consider delisting will be initiated*".

The commitment to engage in a status review has been misconstrued by some as a commitment to delist wolves rather than what it was - a commitment to engage in a transparent public process with no predetermined outcome. We appreciate that most legislators work in good faith with their constituents best interests at heart. However a bill introduced in the 11th hour of first chamber deadlines does not substitute for the rigorous, transparent, science-based public process the agency has been charged with and to which we agreed over a decade ago.

As stated in our written testimony, even if we may disagree with other stakeholders on our preliminary perceptions of what the outcome should be, we stand by that commitment. From our perspective, it is troubling to see the legislature entertain the livestock industry's forum shopping by giving consideration to a precedent-setting piece of legislation just as that process is about to begin.

While we may differ in our ultimate desire in the outcome, we and the many interested stakeholders only partially represented last night deserve an opportunity to make our respective cases and weigh in far more substantively. Contrary to perception, we do not sue just because we do not like an outcome. Though the question was not asked directly of our organization, I feel confident telling you that if the state follows the law and the science, there will be no legal challenge from us and there will be no successful legal challenge from anyone.

We urge you to allow the agency to at least have the opportunity to do the job with which it is tasked, and give the public an opportunity to weigh in before the legislature gives serious consideration to substituting its judgement on a highly contentious and complicated issue.

As it is, wolves are in fact in Phase II management. Requirements for non-lethal conflict prevention as well as restrictions on killing wolves by citizen and agency alike have been relaxed. No emergency exists. The change from Phase I to Phase II is not affected by the endangered status of wolves.

To be sure, there can be differences in interpretation of science. However there is a substantive difference between anecdote and science, between peer-reviewed science and the interpretation of that science by interested parties. Likewise, we agree that it is important not to be dismissive of legitimate concerns. However we were troubled by the degree of misunderstanding, misinformation, and anecdote that substituted for fact at Thursday's hearing (on both HB3514 & 3515). Given that wolves and other native carnivores have long been subject to a tremendous degree of misinformation, prejudice, and fear, that's understandable. But it's time to turn the corner.

Trust works both ways and there is a counter narrative to the one represented last night and conveyed to several committee members in visits to Eastern Oregon. We welcome the opportunity to share it with you and other decision makers. We have staff and supporters in Wallowa County and elsewhere across the state who are living with wolves, who are on compensation committees, and who care deeply about Oregon's wildlife and quality of life. Unfortunately most were not able to attend last night's hearing. We would be pleased for the opportunity to fully share our perspective and allow them to do the same.

Very Sincerely,

Robert Klavins
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