



Testimony Regarding Oregon Wolves
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
By Scott Beckstead, Senior Oregon State Director,
The Humane Society of the United States

VOTE NO ON H.B. 4040

February 3, 2017

Thousands of Oregonians have made their wishes clear: they want wolves protected, both for the sake of the wolves themselves and for future generations of Oregonians. For these reasons, on behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our supporters in Oregon, The HSUS opposes H.B. 4040, which would ratify the ODFW Commission's decision to remove Oregon's gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) from the Oregon Endangered Species Act. The bill would strip the species of much-needed protection and also deny the Commission the authority to take appropriate action to modify and adjust wolf management as conditions require.

While Oregon can be proud that it embarked on a good-faith effort to manage wolves in a way that is balanced and respectful, we have seen in other states that stripping wolves of legal protections has led not just to wasteful trophy hunting, but even to deliberate cruelty toward them. We must be mindful that any step toward removing protections for wolves creates the potential for allowing that mindset to take hold in Oregon, something that would be deeply offensive to a majority of Oregonians, who support extending to all animals a basic level of respect and compassion.

Learning to live with native carnivores like wolves is a precondition to preserving and restoring our natural heritage, as well as doing right by wolves and the rest of nature. Throughout history, many peoples have done and continue to do tremendous harm to wolves and their habitat. When we learn to co-exist alongside wolves to our mutual well-being, we are making substantial ecological, social and ethical strides to living in right relationship with the earth.

As stated by top wolf biologists, we know that: 1) wolves are not recovered in Oregon; 2) the ODFW's population viability models and analyses that flowed from those models are fundamentally flawed; and finally, 3) the premature delisting of wolves may result in their extinction from Oregon.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.