



HB 4040 and SB 1557

Wolf Delisting Bills Set a Dangerous Precedent for Wildlife Management

Background: With fewer than 100 known wolves in the entire state, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 4-2 last November to remove gray wolves from the state list of endangered species. Oregon endangered species law (ORS 496.172) grants the Commission exclusive authority to list, delist or relist species as threatened or endangered. Wolves are now delisted throughout Oregon under the state endangered species act and continue to be managed according to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. The Commission and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are currently undertaking a required five-year review and update of the Wolf Plan.

HB 4040 and SB 1557: These bills seek to usurp the statutory authority of the Commission by legislatively delisting wolves. HB 4040 goes even further by impeding the Commission’s authority to relist wolves and undermining the existing Wolf Plan, which provides relisting criteria.

Position: We oppose HB 4040 and SB 1557 because they are precedent setting, controversial, and unnecessary.

- Sets a dangerous precedent for amending the state endangered species act and constraining the Commission’s authority on a species by species basis.
- “Ratification” of the Commission’s controversial delisting decision is not harmless. It is unprecedented and chips away the Commission’s authority and ability to effectively manage Oregon’s imperiled species and other wildlife.
- Unnecessary, given the Commission’s vote in November 2015 to remove gray wolves from the list of endangered species.
- Legislative delisting does nothing to address concerns raised by bill proponents. The Wolf Plan guides wolf management, and the review process currently under way is the proper forum for addressing those concerns.
- Circumvents the stakeholder process under way to review and update Oregon’s Wolf Plan.
- Sidesteps the right of Oregonians to participate and hold public agencies accountable in processes that impact our state’s natural heritage.
- Puts legislators in the position of unnecessarily taking sides on an already controversial decision that defied the wishes of the vast majority of Oregonians. 96% of over 10,000 public comments received on delisting were in favor of maintaining protections for wolves.
- Neither bill honors the request of the Commission – made during the delisting decision -- for the legislature to address wolf poaching.

We encourage you to oppose these measures to preserve the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission’s authority and ability to effectively manage imperiled species, and to allow the public and stakeholder processes currently underway to proceed unimpeded.