

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair Olsen, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for hearing my testimony today on HB 4040. My name is Cheryl Martin. I'm a 6th generation rancher in the Baker Valley of Eastern Oregon and the District 2 Vice President for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. District 2 includes Wallowa, Baker and Union counties.

For those of us who live in Eastern Oregon, wolves are a reality. They are not an ethereal idea or a picture of a fluffy placid face looking back at you. They chase, they harass, they frighten and yes, they kill. They cause worry, fear, sleepless nights and yes, economic stress. But, they're a reality and we will continue to find ways to coexist.

From the time the first wolves came into Oregon, the ranching community worked tirelessly and collaboratively with multiple groups to form a comprehensive wolf plan. It was a good plan and has proven to be very successful as evidenced by the number of wolves and wolf packs now living in our state. The numbers have far exceeded expectations and we now see wolves dispersing in areas all across Oregon. The wolf plan has and is working so successfully that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission, using accurate scientific data and realistic accounting, were able to delist the wolf in November. I want to thank the ODFW and the commission for using sound judgment and factual information to come to that decision. As we have observed over the past years, the fear of litigation practices have sadly and many times wrongly influenced decisions made by our agencies.

It is now time to make the bold and correct move to ratify this decision made by the ODFW Commission to remove the wolf from the state list of endangered species and allow the wolf plan to work the way it was designed. It is time to end the spending of hundreds of thousands of taxpayers dollars and hundreds of hours of ODFW's time and resources on ridiculous lawsuits. Imagine, the amount of money that would be spent on lawsuits actually being used on wolf management. By ratifying this decision, it will not change the intent of the wolf plan, will not endanger the numbers of wolves in our state, nor will it impact the habitat of the wolf. It is a means to complete the intent of the cooperatively designed wolf plan. I strongly urge you to ratify HB 4040.

Thank you and respectfully submitted by:

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