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Dear committee members,

The Oregon Outdoor Council, representing the interests of nearly 700,000 Oregon hunters and anglers, respectfully requests your support for House Bill 4040. House Bill 4040 supports our wildlife professionals' decision to follow the wolf management plan as crafted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and stakeholders.

The 2010 Wolf Management Plan, which was developed through a collaborative effort with stakeholders from environmental organizations, ranchers, and sportsmen states that the purpose of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan focuses on methods and procedures to protect wolves in the early stages of implementation **so that the species can be delisted and a self-sustaining population persists.**

According to the best available science and data, Oregon's wolf population is growing faster than expected and ODFW anticipates that regardless of the listing status aggressive growth will persist. We have met the benchmark of breeding pairs for consecutive years and according to the management plan, it's time to move on to the next phase of wolf management.

As a country based on laws, it's important that the citizens of our state can trust our government agencies and legislature to follow multi-stakeholder agreements. Without that trust, collaborative efforts have no meaning and citizens' trust in the decisions made by our agencies is lost. Given this consideration, the state currently faces a lawsuit from one segment of the stakeholder groups because their desired goals have not been met. The purpose of collaborative stakeholder groups is to find middle ground and ensure that everyone feels they have a voice and is represented at the table. The state should not diverge from the management plan because of threats from any stakeholder group, as it jeopardizes the entire stakeholder process. Furthermore, one of the stakeholder groups taking legal action was recently noted in a news article to have filed 50 local and regional lawsuits against government agencies within the past 12 years. This is unacceptable behavior.

The facts are clear and simple. The wolf population in Oregon is going to continue to grow and maintain a viable and sustainable population as is the purpose of the wolf management plan. It's time that we allow our government agency to do the job that the citizens have hired them to do.

Furthermore, states that are further along in their wolf recovery and management process have noted that delays in sound scientific wolf management have been detrimental to other wildlife species within their state. It's important to remember that ORS 496.012 requires that the state manage ALL wildlife for **optimal recreational benefit**. The following are three examples that further support why it is important to continue to follow the wolf management plan and not let the process be derailed by lawsuits. World-renowned biologists and wolf experts David Mech and Pat Valkenburg were quoted as follows:

- *In 2014, **Minnesota** was forced to eliminate their moose season due a sharp decline in the population. The world-renowned wolf expert David Mech attributed the decline to wolf predation. **"My data tends to indicate the problem was there were more wolves,"** Mech told the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 2014.*
- *The Lolo elk herd in **Idaho** has declined from 16,000 to less than 2,000 today. The majority of experts have concluded that the wolf, in part, caused the decline and is preventing the elk from recovering. Even a retired biologist and pro-wolf organization leader agrees, **"Certainly wolves are causing this decline to linger longer"** stated on an environmental stakeholder group's blog in 2014.*
- *In **Alaska**, Pat Valkenburg has worked as a Caribou Research Biologist, Research Coordinator, and Deputy Commissioner for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for over 30 years. He has documented the significant impact wolves have, noting **"wolf and bear predation has caused a further decline and prevented recovery. On Unimak now, we predict the caribou herd will disappear, largely because of wolf predation,"** Valkenburg said at a wildlife symposium in Oregon in 2014.*