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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

February 18, 2016

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Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
900 Court Street N.E.  
Room 347  
Salem, OR 97031

Dear Chairman Edwards and Members of the Committee:

I urge you to stand behind the public process and provisions embodied in the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Wolf Plan) and support HB 4040A to ratify the decision of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to remove gray wolves from Oregon's endangered species list.

For over a decade, ranchers, wildlife managers and other interested parties worked to develop, agree upon and implement the Wolf Plan to balance conservation with the needs of ranchers and Oregon's rural communities. As wolf populations grew and spread across eastern Oregon, these local efforts contributed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) decision to remove gray wolves from the federal endangered species list east of Highway 395. I worked closely with the ranchers to reaffirm that decision to ensure local management under the state plan and the USFWS is now considering delisting wolves across the rest of the state. The federal requirements for endangered species are stringent and provide a clear roadmap to follow. Through the Wolf Plan, Oregonians' have met that challenge and should proceed along that path.

For ranchers living with the threat of wolves and suffering livestock losses to wolf depredation, this process has been a long one and not without frustration. Throughout, however, ranchers and their communities have complied with the guidelines of the plan, spending time and money to implement non-lethal deterrents with uncertain results. All of this was done with the expectation that the next steps of the Wolf Plan would be followed upon meeting the proper number of breeding pairs and other goals outlined in the plan.

The research, data gathering and initial recommendation of delisting by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife last year, subsequent public meetings and the Commission's final decision to remove gray wolves from Oregon's Endangered Species Act followed the public process and balanced approach envisioned by the Wolf Plan. It is unfortunate that rather than celebrating that achievement, special interest groups have sought to go around that cooperative process and filed a legal challenge.

Oregon's Wolf Plan is an example of doing things the Oregon way – coming to the table and putting in the hard work to balance disparate interests and craft a plan that works for Oregon. I hope you will honor the efforts of everyone who participated in that process and support HB 4040A.

Sincerely,

Greg Walden  
Member of Congress