



Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation
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February 6, 2024

Good morning, Chair Representative Helms and the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water.

The Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation would like to support HB 4148.

Disease is the number one issue affecting the management of wild sheep across Oregon and much of western north America and focusing additional resources on disease management and prevention would be a wonderful gift for Oregon's wild sheep and other wildlife.

Just last week, another pneumonia outbreak was detected in bighorn sheep in Hells Canyon in mid-December and is ongoing. In past outbreaks within the Hells Canyon area, agencies have observed the disease traveling to many of the existing bighorn sheep populations along the Snake, Salmon, Grande Ronde, Wenaha Rivers and Asotin Creek. This is typically followed by years of poor lamb survival and a reduction in the population.

The bacterium responsible for the pneumonia outbreak is *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, commonly referred to as "Movi." Exposure of bighorn sheep populations to Movi is usually followed by a die-off. The severity of these die-offs can vary, with population declines ranging from 5 to 100 percent. On average, about 50 percent of the population survives the initial die-off. Currently, additional information is being gathered to understand the severity of the die-off and the potential next steps.

This is the latest of several pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep that have occurred over the past century in the Hells Canyon area and across western North America. There is no way to treat animals to slow the spread of disease or reduce deaths. The disease will have to run its course over the spring and summer. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and

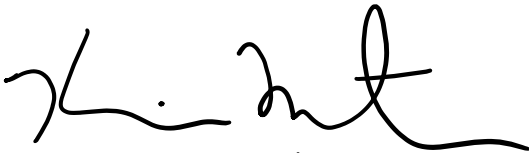
Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation
"Putting Wild Sheep on the Mountain"
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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), with their partners, are working together to monitor and address this situation.

The Idaho, Oregon, and Washington Wild Sheep Foundation Chapters and the National Wild Sheep Foundation are providing support for the states' efforts. The states and the Wild Sheep Foundation along with other participants of the Hells Canyon Bighorn Sheep Initiative including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Nez Perce Tribe and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation will continue to work together moving forward.

Thank you for your support for the wildlife resources of Oregon by passing HB 4148.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Martin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Martin, President
Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation