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GROWING STRONG

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
United States House of Representatives
409 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Via Email

Dear Congressman Bentz,

On behalf of the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB), I am writing to convey our support for the Pet and Livestock Protection Act, recently introduced by Congresswoman Lauren Boebert and Congressman Tom Tiffany, which aims to delist the gray wolf from the Endangered Species List and return management authority to individual states.

OFB is the state's largest and most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing more than 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to nursery stock, cattle, cranberries, and timber, our members operate farms and ranches spanning from just a few acres to thousands. They employ a wide spectrum of farming practices including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

As of the end of 2023, Oregon's gray wolf population was documented at a minimum of 178 individuals, maintaining the same count as the previous year¹. While this stabilization indicates successful recovery efforts, it also underscores the need for adaptive management strategies tailored to our state's unique ecological and economic landscape. As you know, federal delisting does not mean there is a lack of oversight or management.

In Oregon, wolves are no longer listed as a state endangered species as of November 10, 2015, but they remain classified as a special status game mammal and are protected under the Oregon Wolf Plan. While wolves east of Highways 395/78/95 were removed from the federal Endangered Species List in 2011, those in western Oregon experienced fluctuating protections—delisted on January 4, 2021, but relisted on February 10, 2022. As a result, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service retains management authority over wolves west of these highways, including decisions regarding harassment and lethal removal.

Wolf management in Oregon follows a phased approach based on population size and distribution. The Oregon Wolf Plan provides stronger protections when wolf numbers are low and becomes,

¹ wolf.org

theoretically, less restrictive as populations grow. However, it is important to note that delisting under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in Oregon does not necessarily permit additional take of wolves, and management policies continue to emphasize conservation while balancing the needs of local communities and wildlife coexistence.

In 2022, Oregon experienced a significant increase in wolf-related livestock depredations, with 76 confirmed incidents compared to 49 in 2021². These incidents have substantial economic impacts on our ranchers and farmers, who are vital to Oregon's economy and cultural heritage.

Empowering Oregon to manage its gray wolf population allows for the implementation of locally appropriate measures that consider both conservation objectives and the well-being of our agricultural sector. State wildlife officials possess the expertise and contextual understanding necessary to develop and enforce policies that effectively mitigate human-wildlife conflicts while ensuring the sustainability of wolf populations.

Oregon Farm Bureau thanks you for your support of the Pet and Livestock Protection Act to restore state authority over gray wolf management and stands ready to help however we can.

Sincerely,



Greg Addington
Executive Director
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² dfw.state.or.us and rmef.org