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Formerly Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC)

[www.oregonwild.org](http://www.oregonwild.org)

January 12, 2012

Curtis Martin, President  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
3415 Commercial Street SE, Suite 217  
Salem, OR 97302

Mr. Martin,

As the incoming president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, I am writing to congratulate you, and to extend an olive branch in hopes of finding common ground on protecting Oregon's natural heritage. Conservationists and the livestock industry have recently been at odds on a range of environmental issues, and nowhere has that been clearer than on wolf recovery. Fighting over killing wolves and weakening wildlife protections has not benefitted your industry, conservation interests, or taxpayers. It certainly has not helped the wildlife we all value.

Rather than continue to fight, we'd much prefer to work on a mutually beneficial solution – collaborating on a wolf and wildlife-friendly beef labeling program that would offer livestock producers who embrace conservation the opportunity to realize the significant economic and marketing benefits from doing so. Given the strong public support for wolf recovery and wildlife conservation in Oregon, and the public's record of embracing pro-conservation businesses, we believe this approach could offer a win-win solution for both responsible ranchers and native wildlife like wolves.

We would welcome the opportunity to sit down with you, and other stakeholders, in February to discuss this concept. Please let us know your interest and availability.

Our two organizations have been in serious conflict in recent years over OCA's opposition to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, advocacy for relaxed standards for wildlife conservation in Oregon, and desire to see greatly expanded killing of wolves that come into conflict with livestock operations. We have been particularly frustrated at OCA's unwillingness to support the provisions in the wolf plan that focus on conservation, education, and conflict prevention while at the same stridently advocating for the portions of the plan that allow wolves to be shot.

We believe that such advocacy is not constructive, and harms both wildlife conservation and the public's perception of the livestock industry in Oregon.

Wolves bring economic, ecological, and symbolic benefits, and Oregonians have repeatedly demonstrated overwhelming support for their recovery. Even so, that recovery remains fragile. Thirteen years after the first wolf returned to Oregon, the state remains home to less than 30 confirmed wolves and only one breeding pair. Though they are not a threat to the livestock industry as a whole, we recognize they can have locally significant impacts on individual livestock operations. Those impacts can be significantly reduced through the adoption of a number of non-lethal activities and improvements in husbandry. Oregon Wild, other conservation groups, and Oregon taxpayers have helped fund these activities, and the State of Oregon is putting a publicly-funded compensation program in place to help the industry re-adjust to living with wolves on the landscape.

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We believe such efforts are positive, but insufficient and unsustainable. It would be in the best interest of the livestock industry and conservation advocates – as well as taxpayers and native wildlife – to move away from historic “winner-take-all” conflicts over wolf management. It is in our collective interest to look for ways to create market-based mechanisms to reward responsible landowners and businesses. Livestock operations that take significant steps to become more wolf and wildlife friendly can, and should, enjoy economic benefits from doing so.

We believe a wolf-friendly marketing campaign with the support of conservationists actively working to protect wolves and other native wildlife could help reduce conflict, increase the economic viability and social acceptance of your industry, be fiscally responsible to taxpayers, and ensure abundant populations of all native wildlife.

When we fight over killing wildlife, no one wins. Though there is understandably distrust between our organizations, we believe there is an opportunity to find common ground. We hope you agree and look forward to hearing from you regarding our shared goal of a livable and prosperous future for all Oregonians.

Please let us know your availability and interest in a February meeting

Sincerely,

Steve Pedery  
Conservation Director  
Oregon Wild