

March 16, 2017

Chairman Michael Finley
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

Re: Oppose public hunting and trapping of wolves in Oregon

Dear Chair Finley and Members of the Commission,

During last year's debate on HB 4040 -- the controversial bill to legislatively delist wolves from Oregon's Endangered Species Act -- it became very clear that most Oregonians, along with most legislators, strongly oppose hunting and trapping of wolves. However, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is now considering changes to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that would open the door to hunting and trapping of wolves. I oppose any revisions to the Wolf Plan that would allow members of the public to hunt or trap wolves. **We must allow Oregon's small gray wolf population to continue their recovery and dispersal throughout their remaining suitable habitat.**

Deputizing members of the public to hunt or trap wolves for ODFW is a slippery slope to an open hunting and trapping season. ODFW policies should reflect the values of the majority of Oregonians, many of whom do not hunt or fish. In fact, a recent Mason Dixon poll of 800 registered Oregon voters found 72% of Oregon voters oppose sport hunting of wolves. Opposition was even stronger in rural areas outside of the Willamette Valley, where 74% oppose sport hunting of wolves. Yet, the updated Wolf Plan could establish a precedent for a general hunting and trapping season that would greatly increase polarization and controversy over wolf management.

Prohibiting members of the public from hunting or trapping does not limit the ability of ODFW, livestock operators, or other government agencies to use lethal means to address chronic depredation or perceived threats to human safety. We urge you to oppose any public hunting and trapping of gray wolves in the updated Wolf Plan to provide adequate time for wolves to recover to a more sustainable population level in the state. Taking a strong stand today will help Oregon avoid the bitter social conflict and divisiveness sport hunting and trapping of wolves has caused in other states.

Sincerely,

State Rep. David Gomberg