



KATE BROWN
Governor

March 14, 2016

The Honorable Jeanne P. Atkins
Secretary of State
136 State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Secretary Atkins:

Today I signed into law HB 4040, which ratifies the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission's decision to de-list wolves under the Oregon Endangered Species Act. I also signed HB 4046, which increases penalties for poaching wildlife, including wolves.

I am proud of Oregon's leadership on wolf conservation. The Oregon Wolf Plan—and in particular the collective engagement by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, wolf conservation groups, livestock, landowner and hunting communities—has enabled a remarkable wildlife recovery story. I want this success story to continue, which relates to my signing HB 4040 and HB 4046.

The trajectory of wolf populations in Oregon remains strong, with available habitat and prey to support continued growth.

The Oregon Wolf Plan established legally binding rules that ensure continued wolf protection and population growth—on both sides of the State—regardless of their Oregon ESA status. This fact has been overlooked in much of the HB 4040 debate, and it addresses any concerns I might have over the practical effect of de-listing on wolf recovery.

Over the past decade, while not of their asking and not without tension, many ranchers, hunters, landowners and others have come to recognize wolves as a valid and lasting part of Oregon's present and future landscape. Meanwhile, conservationists desire more wolves across the State and remain concerned over examples of anti-wolf hostility. Wolves tap into deep emotions and values, often rooted in how we as humans live on the land and exist with nature. As much as any issue, wolves can be used to represent an urban-rural divide in Oregon and beyond.



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I support wolves. I also recognize challenges arise in rural landscapes where wolves exist. Minimizing divisions between well-meaning Oregonians and providing the social space for wolves demands compromise and collaboration. While HB 4040 does not resolve this challenge, I believe the bi-partisan legislative support that brought the bill to my desk realized the importance of it.

It is time to keep the Oregon Wolf Plan moving forward. As part of the upcoming revision process, I expect the Commission and Department to ensure the Plan and its rules will keep us on a positive population trajectory across the entire state, focus on efforts to reduce wolf-livestock conflict rather than simply responding to it, and incorporate the best current science into management approaches. I expect all interests to come together during this Plan revision process, to look to the future instead of the past, and to grow common understanding and ideally agreements by working together through the Commission's transparent and open process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Governor Kate Brown

GKB:sh