



August 19, 2026

Via Electronic Mail Only

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Ranking Member
US Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: Request for Hearing and Support for S. 1306, Federal Gray Wolf Delisting Legislation

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse,

The Tri-Counties Workgroup writes on behalf of the Counties of Siskiyou and Modoc, California, and Klamath, Oregon to respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works hold a hearing on and advance S. 1306. This bill would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) to reissue the 2020 final rule removing the gray wolf from the federal list of endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Service reached the 2020 delisting decision after analyzing the best available scientific data, including data on population abundance, distribution, and genetic connectivity of gray wolf populations. A federal district court vacated the rule in 2022, returning the gray wolf to federally listed status in most states, including Oregon and California. In response, the Service conducted another comprehensive scientific review in 2024 and again concluded that federal protections were not warranted for gray wolves in the Western United States. Despite these repeated findings, federal protections continue to restrict the management options available to states and, in turn, limit livestock producers' ability to protect their herds.

As listing decisions continue to be contested in the courts, prolonged legal battles delay effective management, leaving family ranching operations to absorb the costs of ongoing wolf conflict. Livestock depredation has become an increasingly serious problem for ranchers in the Tri-Counties and surrounding areas. A 2026 UC Davis study of the Lassen and Harvey Packs found cattle DNA in 72 percent of wolf scat samples and estimated that cattle accounted for 55 percent of wolf dietary biomass. This level of livestock predation reflects a serious and growing management problem that requires more effective management strategies.

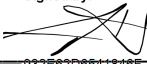
Limited management options also leave ranchers to absorb substantial costs associated with operating in areas of recurring wolf activity. These costs include increased herd monitoring, costly changes in livestock management practices, and indirect losses associated with chronic stress. A peer reviewed UC Davis study found substantially elevated hair cortisol in wolf-exposed cattle, documenting chronic physiological stress. Consistent with this finding, data collected by local ranchers show reduced weight gain and birth rates among cattle in areas occupied by wolves, indicating that chronic stress is likely contributing to long term productivity losses.

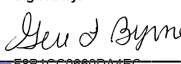


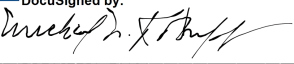
Some local ranchers have resorted to hiring night watchmen solely to protect cattle from wolves overnight, adding another expense that is difficult for family ranching operations to sustain. Wolf recovery is a public conservation goal, but maintaining federal ESA protection after the Service has repeatedly found it is no longer warranted places an undue burden on family ranches and rural communities. Greater state management flexibility is needed to reduce these impacts and make coexistence possible.

Removing the gray wolf from the federal list of endangered and threatened species would provide states with additional management tools and flexibility while allowing continued conservation under state management. Given the Service's findings and the documented impacts on livestock producers and rural economies, we strongly urge the Committee to hold a hearing on S. 1306 and advance the legislation without further delay.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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 Jess W. Harris, District 1
 Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Signed by:

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 Geri Byrne, District V
 Modoc County Board of Supervisors

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 Michael N. Kobseff, District 3
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 Derrick DeGroot
 Klamath County Commissioner

Signed by:

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 Ned Coe, District I
 Modoc County Board of Supervisors

CC: Congressman James Gallagher
 Senator Alex Padilla
 Senator Adam Schiff
 Senator Mike Lee
 Senator Ron Wyden
 Senator Jeff Merkley
 Senator Patty Murray
 Senator Maria Cantwell
 Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
 Modoc County Board of Supervisors
 Klamath County Board of Commissioners