

PETER A. DeFAZIO
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON

TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
RANKING MEMBER



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

June 9, 2016

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
900 Court St. NE, 160
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing to follow up on a conversation we had regarding HB 4040, which you recently signed into law. As you know, I was strongly opposed to HB 4040, which ratified the misguided decision by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to remove the gray wolf from Oregon's Endangered Species Act. The bill also had the unprecedented effect of overriding judicial review of the decision, negating a lawsuit that was filed by conservation organizations.

I am concerned about information that has been brought to my attention that contradicts statements you made to me about your involvement with this legislation. A recent FOIA request unearthed an email sent by one of your natural resources policy advisors, Brett Brownscombe, to lobbyists representing the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, and the Oregon Hunters Association. The email references a letter I sent to Oregon legislators outlining my concerns and opposition to HB 4040. Mr. Brownscombe remarks, "FYI-seems the Representative continues to feel strongly about this issue and is focused on the non-farm, ranch, other portions/interests in his district. He also weighed in like this at the F&W Commission level."

When we recently spoke, you said you were not advocating for the legislation either publicly or privately. I specifically mentioned that Senator Chris Edwards was being pressured by your staff to support HB 4040. You reiterated that you were unaware of your staff's involvement on the issue. Mr. Brownscombe's email indicates that your staff was indeed involved with HB 4040, perhaps without your knowledge. Nonetheless, it is clear your office was engaged on the bill.

Furthermore, I take issue with the reference that I am not concerned with the farm interests in my district. As you know, there is only one small pack of wolves led by OR-7 that resides in the 4th Congressional District. Although livestock depredation by predators is an issue that concerns all Oregon farmers, I am not aware of a single wolf depredation in my district. My office has not received a single complaint from a farmer in my district about wolf depredation on their

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livestock. I do not appreciate your staffs' misrepresentation of my district and my advocacy on behalf of my constituents.

I would appreciate clarification from you on this matter. I care deeply about the plight of gray wolves nationally and especially in Oregon. I will continue to be engaged as the Oregon Wolf Plan review moves forward. I would like to maintain communication with you and your staff on issues surrounding the Wolf Plan but this communication must be built on trust. I hope we can continue to work together on issues of mutual interest and issues of importance to Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter DeFazio". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "D".

Peter DeFazio