

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE
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DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE:
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

June 12, 2018

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The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I write this letter expressing my desire that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) delist the gray wolf from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). At the same time, I write to oppose the reintroduction of the grizzly bear through North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan. For too long, the people of Eastern Washington have had to cope with the mismanagement of one apex predator, and the introduction of a second apex predator will only further risk lives and safety. I request that both decisions receive renewed attention and consultation in conjunction with local government officials and residents to find a solution supported by the people of Eastern Washington.

In 2015, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee's State Director of Fish and Wildlife Jim Unsworth wrote a letter requesting "assistance to encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to complete the delisting of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and remove it from the federal protections under the ESA." USFWS administered a substantial public comment process in 2013 and 2014 and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) wrote a letter during this process supporting USFWS's federal delisting.

The State of Washington has a substantial wolf conservation plan that has received broad support. However, incompatibility between the Washington state management plan and the federal management plan creates a bureaucratic nightmare that leaves communities in Eastern Washington unable to defend themselves against increasing wolf attacks and livestock depredations.

In Congress, I have supported legislation led by my colleague Congressman Dan Newhouse to delist the gray wolf. This legislation has passed the House of Representatives in the 114th and 115th Congress but continues to be blocked from President Donald Trump's desk. As you move forward, I would insist the Administration look at delisting the gray wolf in Washington State.

Following your trip to Washington State, I have received substantial feedback from local representatives, state and county officials, residents, and business owners opposing reintroducing the Grizzly Bear into the North Cascades. At the same time, the proposed reintroduction preempts Washington State law (RCW 77.12.035, SSB 5106), which states grizzly bears "shall not be transplanted or introduced into the state."

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As you continue the Environmental Impact Statement, it is vital that USFWS is meeting with local elected officials, stakeholders, and residents to actively listen to their concerns. I have apprehensions that the public process will be insufficient in addressing local interests, and hope that you will take seriously the concerns of local stakeholders. The federal government must make sound policies that put residents' interests first. Keeping the gray wolf listed and reintroducing the grizzly bear would have devastating consequences in Eastern Washington. I urge you thoroughly revisit both of these issues and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Cathy McMorris Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress