

Cascadia Wildlands

we like it wild.

April 16, 2015

Cascadia Wildlands testimony concerning HB 3188, HB 3140, and HB 3150 House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Good afternoon Chair Witt and members of the committee,

My name is Nick Cady. I am the Legal Director of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands, a regional non-profit conservation organization representing 12,000 members and supporters. Cascadia Wildlands educates, agitates, and inspires a movement to protect and restore Cascadia's wild ecosystems. We envision vast old-growth forests, rivers full of wild salmon, wolves howling in the backcountry, and vibrant communities sustained by the unique landscapes of the Cascadia bioregion.

Our organization and our members oppose HB 3188, 3140 and 3150. There are numerous reasons why, but I want to touch on the primary one here today. Local control of wildlife cannot and will not work — not from a practical standpoint, not from a biological standpoint, and not from a legal standpoint.

First, biologically, species do not abide by political boundaries between counties. Animals have home ranges, they have breeding habitat, feeding habitat, and dispersal corridors. These habitats and species cross county lines. Decisions necessary to maintaining and ensuring viable populations of the wildlife species in this state require holistic management of all of these factors and that will require scientific and biological support and analysis. County by county management of wildlife makes this holistic approach impossible, and locality management just cannot succeed from a biological standpoint.

Secondly, from a legal perspective, the state of Oregon owns the wildlife of the state. The counties do not. The state of Oregon holds and manages the wildlife of this state in trust for all the residents of Oregon. The state has constitutional, common law, and statutory commitments to this regard. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife currently works to fulfill these duties. Individual counties cannot fulfill this mandate.

Finally, this county by county wildlife management solution would never work. Oregon counties are politically fickle and lack scientific or wildlife biology background to make wildlife management decisions. These bills, if passed, are going to create problems. And further, these bills are “solutions” for a problem that does not exist. There is no crisis, no emergency or problem, and no reason for these bills.

Please let the state of Oregon continue to fulfill its responsibilities through the work of ODFW and stakeholder groups. Locally segmenting these responsibilities will not work, and likely impede the state's abilities to satisfy its trust mandates.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Nick Cady
Cascadia Wildlands