

NOTICE OF APPEAL

November 27, 2023

Via Certified Mail, Email, and Public Email Portal: <https://governor.wa.gov/contacting-governor/contacting-governors-office/send-gov-inslee-e-message>

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of Washington
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Appeal of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission’s denial of rulemaking petition to amend WAC 220-440-080 to bring clarity, accountability, and transparency to wolf management

Dear Governor Inslee:

Pursuant to RCW 34.05.330(3), the undersigned hereby appeal the October 28, 2023 decision by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) denying our September 15, 2023 petition, which asked the Commission to undertake rulemaking to develop meaningful standards to regulate the management of state-endangered gray wolves (included as Attachment A).¹

Nearly 18 months after your September 4, 2020 [letter](#) ordering the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to engage in rulemaking to regulate state wolf management, the Department proposed a rule that lacked meaningful or enforceable standards. In response, on July 8, 2022, [the Commission voted 5-4](#) to take “no action” on a potential wolf rule, without any substantive discussion about your direction to “institute practices that will avoid the repeated loss of wolves and livestock in our state.” Since then, the Commission has failed to fulfill its promises to revisit the issue.

Meanwhile, the Department has continued to kill wolves unabated. In fact, of the 53 wolves the Department and state livestock owners have killed in response to wolf-livestock conflicts since 2012, nearly one-third were killed *after* your September 2020 direction. Poaching and tribal hunting also increased sharply during this time period and WDFW reported an average human-caused mortality of 30 wolves a year in 2021 and 2022—more than double the 14 deaths caused by humans in 2020.

Petitioners brought this rulemaking petition in the hopes it would facilitate the serious discussion the Commission should have had three years ago about how to reduce wolf mortality and facilitate wolf recovery. Unfortunately, as explained in the attached letters, Commission leadership only allocated an hour on the Commission agenda to consider the petition—refusing to give petitioners a chance to be heard, hold committee meetings to explore the issues raised, or allow commissioners to hear from leading national experts on wolf-livestock conflict deterrence. Forced into a hasty vote and based on false and misleading information from the Department, the Commission voted 6-3 to reject the petition.

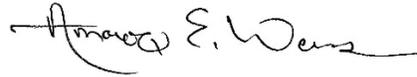
¹ Please also see the attached letter from the Center for Biological Diversity in support of this appeal (Attachment B), which expands on the issues mentioned here.

At a time when wolf populations are under attack in much of the surrounding region, Washington has an opportunity to become a national leader in the rational, science-based management of wolves, while paving the way for a successful statewide wolf recovery effort. Petitioners respectfully ask you to reverse the Commission's October 28, 2023 decision and order the Department to undertake rulemaking to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,



Claire Loeb Davis
Board President/Interim Executive Director
Washington Wildlife First



Amaroq Weiss
Senior Wolf Advocate
Center for Biological Diversity



Patrick Kelly
Montana/Washington State Director
Western Watersheds Project



Bethany Cotton
Conservation Director
Cascadia Wildlands



Lizzy Pennock
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Jennifer McCausland
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Hannah Thompson-Garner
Director of Advocacy and Mission Advancement
Northwest Animal Rights Network



John Rosapepe
Pacific Northwest Representative
Endangered Species Coalition



Brooks Fahy
Executive Director
Predator Defense



Lynn Mason
Grassroots Organizer
Coexisting with Cougars in Klickitat County