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May 9, 2014

The California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

I am writing to you to request that you vote in favor of listing the gray wolf as a threatened or endangered species in California.

The controversial issue is whether the California Fish and Game should list the wolf as an endangered species in addition to a wolf management plan currently being worked on for California. Some have argued that the Department's findings did not determine significant threats to the wolf, which does not *yet* have a known breeding population here. Additionally, other groups, such as the cattle industry, do not want any known predator of cattle or sheep to be given any kind of special status or special protection, because it would affect their livestock or business.

However, I believe that science and common sense support listing the wolves as threatened or endangered as they attempt to move back to California.

First, the gray wolf is not just any predator, it is a *keystone* predator and they help to maintain a balanced ecosystem. They play a significant role in the health, maintenance, and proper functioning of ecosystems. This was dramatically demonstrated when wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park. Here, the elk and deer herds became stronger and healthier, and also, the presences of wolves reduced the herds and forced them to move around more frequently, thereby allowing the aspen and willow trees to flourish in areas where they had previously been destroyed by overgrazing. This in turn, resulted in the return of beavers and riparian birds to the region. Secondly, the wolf management plan, which is being worked on collaboratively by agriculture and wild life conservation groups, would

help to calm the fears of the ranchers. Furthermore, while it may be true that there is not a significant “wildlife threat” to the gray wolf, the threat of extermination by man still exists. It is clear that the protection of the California Fish and Game along with the wolf management plan is what is needed, especially with the decision of the gray wolf’s Federal protection status still undecided.

I would hope, that with the cooperation from politicians, environmentalists and ranchers, we will not have to choose between people, wildlife and cattle.

Peter DeFazio, a ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, released a bipartisan letter, on March 19th, 2014, co-signed by 73 house members, urging the Secretary of the Interior to continue critical protections for endangered gray wolves. The excerpt bellow from this letter, is equally appropriate for what must happen in our beautiful State:

“Continued protections under the Endangered Species Act is the only way that gray wolves will ever return to a significant portion of their range, and reclaim their place as a keystone species of American landscapes.”

I respectfully request that you vote in favor to protect the gray wolf in California, and enable its safe journey back to our wilderness. I hope that one day, my children will know of, and have the opportunity to see the majestic gray wolf in our home state of California.

Thank you, for your time and attention to this crucial matter.

Respectfully Yours,

Daniel Filz

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P.S. (I became interested in the gray wolf when I chose it this year for my 6th grade research project at River Oaks Academy Charter in Westlake Village.)