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Members, Natural Resources Committee,
Idaho State Senate

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come to you today, not as a citizen of Idaho, but as a citizen of Washington State.

As I cannot be present on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, to give my personal testimony in favor of the Wolf Disaster Declaration, please accept my written testimony given here.

I come to you as someone very concerned about what I see happening to Idaho ungulate herds, the dangers to which Idaho citizens are being exposed, and the increasing depredation of livestock resulting from the growing number of Canadian Gray Wolves populating the Idaho landscape.

As you know, Idaho County has experienced the result of 1) the federal mismanagement of the introduced Canadian Gray Wolf, and 2) environmental lawsuits that have kept Idaho from managing an apex predator.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the Canadian Gray Wolf has all but decimated what was once the largest elk herd in Idaho – the Lolo Zone Herd. Calf retention is pretty much zero. What remains of the once great herd is aging which means that with each year that calf retention is zero, the ability of the herd to rebound decreases. The only way for the Lolo Herd to rebound is to drastically reduce the wolf population.

It took seventy years of management, and millions of dollars, to grow the ungulate herds in the Pacific Northwest to the numbers they were in 1994 before the introduction of the Canadian Gray Wolf. In fifteen years, wolves have undone seventy years of hard work and millions of dollars invested; money that has come from taxes and fees paid by sportsman and hunters on selected sporting goods, licenses and tags. The economies in all the states, affected by the overpopulation of Canadian Gray Wolves, are suffering loss of revenue due to declining hunting tags and loss of out-of-state licenses and tags. As you know, Idaho has been hard hit in this arena.

The wolves are now moving west, out of the Lolo Zone wilderness area, and into the Idaho farming/ranching area. In just the last six months, there has been an increase in livestock depredation, the result of the declining elk herds in the Lolo Zone. Beyond depredation, wolves are affecting the bottom line of livestock producers, effecting not only declining calf crops but also declining weight gain in livestock stressed by wolf presence, encounters and hazing. This is effecting the livestock industry of Idaho.

Pets have also fallen victim to slaughter by wolves. Finding one's cherished family pet literally disemboweled and left to die by wolves is beyond heart-wrenching. Scattered through the wilderness area of Clearwater and Idaho Counties are carcasses of elk that have been killed by wolves for sport, then left to rot; many times the animals linger for days before dying.

There have also been at least two instances of wolf/human encounters that could have ended badly, one involving children being prey-tested at a bus stop in the Glenwood/Caribel region east of Kamiah; the other incident involving hunters at a hunting camp in the Lochsa/Selway area east of Kooskia who were chased back to their base camp by a pack of aggressive wolves. While these are the most notable, they are undoubtedly not the only such encounters.

As a lady in northern Idaho discovered, being surrounded by a pack of wolves is terrifying. And as the hunters in the Lochsa/Selway area discovered, wolves are not deterred by gunfire or bullets whizzing by or over their heads. The only thing that deters them, once they become aggressive, is dropping them in their tracks.

Should any Idahoan be deprived of the right to walk their property without fear of a wolf encounter? Should Idahoans have to go out armed to the teeth any time they are beyond the safety of their homes?

But the danger wolves pose goes beyond depredation and aggressive behavior to the diseases they carry that are transmittable to humans and livestock. Among those are rabies, brucellosis and hydatid disease.

Canids (wolves, coyotes, fox, dogs) are the definitive host of the *Echinococcus granulosus* (*E.g.*) tapeworm parasite which lives in the intestines of the canid and results in thousands of eggs beginning expelled in the scat of the canid. These eggs are microscopic and highly mobile, spreading easily on a mere breeze, thus moving to surrounding vegetation where they are eaten by grazing ungulates – deer, moose, elk, mountain goats, mountain sheep, caribou, cows, horses, sheep, goats – which become the intermediate host. Once ingested by ungulates, the eggs hatch in the intestine, burrow through the intestinal wall and enter the circulatory system where they travel most often to the liver and lungs, less often to the heart, spinal column, bone, brain and other internal organs. On reaching their destination, they form a bladder cyst containing thousands of tapeworm heads. This condition is known as Hydatid disease. Within the bladder cyst, tapeworm heads survive for days following the death of the intermediate host, making the infection of a definitive host more likely, thus beginning the cycle once again. With regard to the infection of livestock, how long before livestock producers have to have their livestock tested before entering the sale ring, where infected animals will either have to be treated before sale at the expense of the producer or sold at a lesser price?

Humans, like ungulates, are an intermediate host, most often contracting the disease when the family dog finds an infected dead ungulate, feeds on the carcass, becomes infected, and begins dispersing *E.g.* tapeworm eggs, via the scat, around farm buildings, on lawns where children play and roll in the grass, and in homes where children play on the floor, where the dog may lay on the furniture and beds, and family members don't necessarily wash their hands before popping something in their mouth. Merely mowing the lawn where infected scat lays, could result in the individual pushing or riding the mower ingesting the highly mobile eggs. The eggs can disburse to vegetable gardens, berry patches, and fruit trees where produce is not necessarily washed before eaten. The eggs are viable for up to three years in extreme cold but are killed by fire.

Hydatid disease can exist in the body for years without detection. If the bladder cyst bursts inside the body, the host stands an above average chance of dying from anaphylactic shock. The disease, once diagnosed, is difficult to treat as invasive procedures can result in the spread of the tapeworm and medications to kill the tapeworm heads are not always effective.

Many point to the low incidence of Hydatid disease in Canada in claiming that humans have little risk of contracting the disease. And Canada does have a low incidence of the disease *because they kill wolves that get too close to populated areas*. That is not happening in the United States, anywhere that wolves now populate the landscape.

As you may know, 62% of the 63 wolf carcasses tested in Idaho, between 2006 and 2008, were infected with the *E.g.* tapeworm. In this same timeframe, the tapeworm was also found in Idaho ungulates. With each passing day, with each passing year that wolves are allowed to continue to grow in numbers, the risk to humans increases.

Because of the density of wolves in Idaho, many are now crossing over into Washington and Oregon. Northeastern Oregon is experiencing a sharp increase in livestock depredation. In Eastern Washington, we are seeing an increase in livestock depredation, wolf/human encounters, and wildlife coming in around farm buildings and into residential areas, trying to escape the threat of wolves, thus increasing the risk of human exposure to Hydatid disease. Spokane Valley has seen an increased incidence of moose taking up residence in the residential areas. Where I live, [REDACTED] we have seen a decided increase of deer taking up residence in the residential area, and to a lesser degree, moose.

Ladies and gentlemen, the hour is late, the disaster caused by the growing population of wolves on the Idaho landscape beyond reason or common sense. Please pass the Wolf Disaster Declaration before you on April 6, 2011, that Idaho can begin to take the steps necessary to stop and reverse this disaster, steps heretofore curtailed by federal mismanagement and environmental lawsuits.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lynn M Stuter

Lynn M Stuter

cc: Juanita Budell, Secretary, (jbudell@senate.idaho.gov)
Senator Sheryl Nuxoll, (snuxoll@senate.idaho.gov)