



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

October 18, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of Interior
Department of Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20240
Fax (202) 219-2374

VIA FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL

RE: Termination of Designated Agent Status

Dear Secretary Salazar,

In Idaho, wolves serve as a constant reminder of how far we have strayed from the Founding Fathers' original intent of a national government with limited, enumerated powers bestowed by the states. Wolves were forced on Idaho in 1994 with no regard for the impacts the species would have on our people, wildlife and livestock. While some herald the introduction of wolves and the current population as a biological triumph, history will show that this program was a tragic example of oppressive, ham-handed "conservation" at its worst. Idahoans have suffered this intolerable situation for too long, but starting today at least the State no longer will be complicit.

As you know, Idaho stands ready to manage wolves when the species is once again delisted. Until then, the State will not manage wolves as the designated agent of the federal government. That means the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) will not perform statewide monitoring for wolves, conduct investigations into illegal killings, provide state law enforcement in response to illegal takings or implement the livestock depredation response program.

Instead, I am directing the Idaho Fish and Game Commission to immediately refocus its efforts on protecting our ungulate herds. IDFG already has identified several zones across the state where wolves are devastating our deer, elk and moose. IDFG will be submitting additional applications, like the one you received for the Lolo Zone, for these areas as soon as possible so we can exercise our sovereign right to protect our wildlife. I have asked IDFG, where appropriate, to use experienced volunteers as special agents to aid Idaho in carrying out these control actions and reduce costs to the State.

This directive preserves an individual's right to kill a wolf in self defense or in the defense of another person. It does not jeopardize the existing flexibility landowners and permittees have to protect their livestock and pets from wolves. Additionally, this approach does not ask Idahoans who continue suffering wolves – especially

sportsmen – to subsidize any part of this federal program or bear the risk or burden of inadequate federal funding in the future.

I understand your commitment to maintain funding levels this year similar to those we have had in the past and the uncertainty you face in the annual federal budgeting process. My concern is that the Department of Interior will not fund the program at levels that completely eliminate the need to use sportsmen funds for any portion of wolf management.

The role of designated agent was lauded in 2006 as a means of demonstrating that states like Idaho could manage wolves. We showed, during delisting, that we are responsible stewards of all our wildlife, including your wolves. We also showed that we could successfully manage a hunting season for wolves as we do for other species. The State managed wolves as part of the ecosystem, in concert with other species and needs, which was ironically decried by environmentalists who seemingly want wolves to benefit at the expense of other wild and domestic species.

Today I join many Idahoans in questioning whether there is any benefit to being a designated agent without the flexibility of a public hunt, which has been denied. Idaho has an approved management plan and has as much flexibility as allowed under federal regulations. Moreover, I am unconvinced that continuing as a designated agent gets us any closer to delisting than we are today.

Do not misconstrue my disdain for our current situation; I am still committed to finding a path forward for delisting. My goal remains restoring state management under our approved plan as quickly as possible, if for no other reason than to fulfill the promise of our State law that all wildlife within our borders will be managed by the State. To that end, I am encouraged by the efforts of representatives from the three legislatures (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) to see if there is a path forward for delisting and state management.

Although we could not agree during the course of our negotiations, I share your commitment to delist the species and restore state management as quickly as possible. It is truly frustrating that we cannot accomplish that shared goal today.

As Always – Idaho, “Esto Perpetua”

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "C. L. Butch Otter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "O".

C. L. “Butch” Otter
Governor of Idaho