
HOUSE BILL 2423

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Kretz, Springer, Schmick, and Dent

Read first time 01/18/24. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to gray wolf management; adding a new section to
2 chapter 77.36 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an
3 expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds the majestic gray
6 wolf to be a symbol of the wilderness and a marvel to all
7 Washingtonians. The howl of the gray wolf, a song of nature's
8 resilience, epitomizes their role as an apex predator. The gray wolf
9 serves a crucial role in their ecosystem, particularly to species
10 down the food chain. This in turn improves biodiversity, offering
11 immense human benefits that are almost too great to be measured. The
12 success in the revival of gray wolf populations in Washington has
13 proven to be one of the most successful recoveries of an extirpated
14 apex species in United States history. This should be celebrated and
15 modeled for future recovery efforts. It is important to always look
16 for ways to improve on our processes and further perfect our recovery
17 efforts. In this way, other counties in our state should learn from
18 the more successful counties that have more than achieved the lofty
19 recovery goals placed before them. In order to maximize recovery
20 efforts for all the vital species in Washington, we must allow those

1 counties that have successfully recovered gray wolf populations to
2 focus their efforts on other animals in danger of extinction.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) The department shall form a work group to develop a regional
6 plan for gray wolf management in the portion of eastern Washington
7 where the gray wolf is not designated by the federal government as
8 threatened or endangered as of January 1, 2024.

9 (2) Members of the work group must include representatives of
10 county cattlemen organizations, representatives of county
11 governments, a representative from a regional nonprofit organization
12 that operates range riding and other year-round wolf and livestock
13 conflict avoidance tactics in northeast Washington, and a
14 representative from a conservation nonprofit. The department shall
15 invite affected Indian tribes to participate and shall give affected
16 Indian tribes the opportunity to review drafts of the plan before it
17 is completed. The department is encouraged to invite representatives
18 of the United States forest service. The department shall hire an
19 outside third-party neutral facilitator to ensure effective
20 functioning of the work group.

21 (3) At a minimum, the plan must address the following objectives:

22 (a) Increased cooperation with input from county governments,
23 cattlemen associations, and local organizations providing range
24 riding and other conflict deterrence efforts with respect to the
25 methods and approaches to minimizing impacts to livestock production;

26 (b) Minimization of livestock loss and economically costly stress
27 on livestock and minimizing the need for lethal control of wolves;

28 (c) Improved responsiveness from the department on planning
29 proactive deterrence for ranchers;

30 (d) Faster response time from the department when lethal control
31 is required;

32 (e) Habitat improvement for ungulate populations;

33 (f) An improved livestock loss and damage compensation program;
34 and

35 (g) Maintaining recovery objectives and an overall stable wolf
36 population in the region.

37 (4) The department shall provide progress reports to the
38 legislature on regional plan development in compliance with RCW
39 43.01.036 by December 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. The department

1 shall complete and implement the regional plan by December 31, 2025.
2 If the work group does not reach agreement on the regional plan
3 within six months, a minority report must be included.
4 (5) This section expires June 30, 2026.

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