



Washington State Legislature

March 26, 2015

Superintendent Karen Taylor-Goodrich,
North Cascades National Park Service Complex
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

RE: Comment Period for Grizzly Bears in the North Cascade National Park

Dear Superintendent Taylor-Goodrich,

We urge you to collaborate with the Washington State Legislature, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and local communities as you plan for grizzly bear restoration in the North Cascades. These planning efforts should be consistent with Washington's previously established statutory policy of natural grizzly bear recovery. We are opposed to moving grizzly bears into the state.

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have opened up a public comment period seeking input on the purpose, need, objectives, potential alternatives, and other issues associated with grizzly bear restoration in the North Cascades.

The federal agencies indicate that the planning process will evaluate various alternative courses of action, including taking no action and active restoration alternatives such as moving grizzly bears into the portion of the North Cascades within Washington's borders.

Although we are avid supporters of wildlife and all forms of wildlife-oriented recreation, we have deep concerns about the potential scope of the planning process. Most alarming is the federal agencies' plan to consider bringing grizzly bears to Washington.

First, the Legislature has an established state policy on grizzly bear restoration, (RCW 77.12.035, SSB 5106 (1995)) which states that "[g]rizzly bears shall not be transplanted or introduced into the state." Instead, the Legislature calls for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to:

- Manage programs on publicly owned lands to encourage the natural regeneration of grizzly bears in areas with suitable habitat;
- Use only grizzly bears native to Washington in management efforts; and

- Participate in discussions and negotiations with federal and state agencies relating to grizzly bear management, and to communicate, support, and implement the statutory policy.

The state's policy towards natural grizzly bear restoration is clear. We urge you to respect Washington's position as the planning process moves forward.

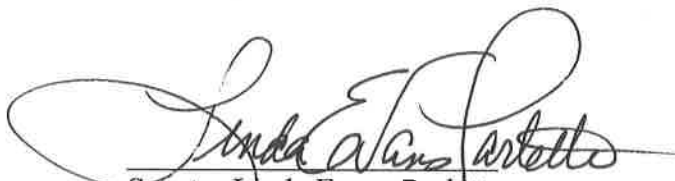
Second, deliberate movement of grizzly bears into the state is the wrong choice for Washington. We are currently experiencing a rapid expansion of wolf populations. As a result, the state is dealing with difficult issues such as livestock damage, deer and elk impacts, and social tolerance in areas with significant wolf numbers. The state needs support from the federal government as it deals with these challenges, not added complications from an introduced predator population.

In order to assist Washington, the federal agencies should focus their time and resources elsewhere. Efforts are underway at the state level, through both proposed legislation and an executive order, to promote outdoor recreation opportunities in the state. Other specific recreational projects are too numerous to count, with just one relevant example being the longstanding effort to rebuild the upper Stehekin Valley Road and enhance public access to North Cascades National Park. We need the federal government's assistance developing recreational and economic opportunities, not new wildlife management challenges.

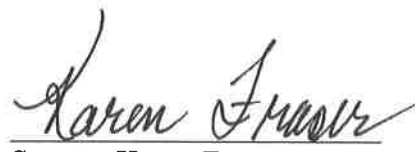
We urge you to respect Washington's statutory grizzly bear management policy, and to conduct your planning in coordination with the Legislature, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and local communities. **Simply put, moving grizzly bears into the state is not an acceptable alternative.**

Please contact Senator Parlette's office with any further questions or comments. She will share with all others who have signed onto this letter.


Sincerely,




Senator Linda Evans Parlette
12th Legislative District



Senator Karen Fraser
22nd Legislative District



Senator Pam Roach
31st Legislative District



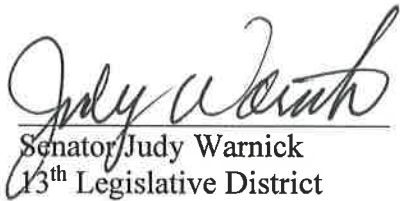
Senator Brian Dansel
7th Legislative District



Senator Mike Padden
4th Legislative District



Senator Kirk Pearson
39th Legislative District



Senator Judy Warnick
13th Legislative District



Representative Joel Kretz
7th Legislative District




Representative Shelly Short
7th Legislative District



Representative Joe Schmick
9th Legislative District



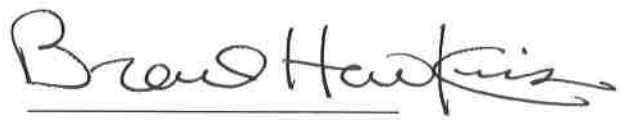
Representative Brian Blake
19th Legislative District



Representative Cary Condotta
12th Legislative District



Representative Tom Dent
13th Legislative District



Representative Brad Hawkins
12th Legislative District