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Wolf supporters plan to pack Fish and Game meeting

[Matthew Hall](#) 2 hours ago

Environmental advocates are planning to gather in Santa Monica this week in defense of an endangered wolf species.

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) is planning a rally Wednesday to encourage the California Fish and Game Commission to oppose a Trump administration proposal that would remove the gray wolf from the federal Endangered Species Act.

“Wolves will never truly return home to California if Trump’s plan goes through,” said Jenny Keatinge, California wildlife policy specialist with the Center for Biological Diversity. “Stripping federal protections from this iconic species now would contradict science, subvert the law and undermine decades of wolf recovery efforts. We hope California’s top wildlife officials take a stand against this disastrous proposal.”

In California, one pack has established itself, with the breeding male an offspring of a wolf that had wandered south from Oregon in 2011. A California judge recently upheld protection for gray wolves under the state’s Endangered Species Act, rejecting a legal challenge from ranchers.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recently reported that the number of known wolves in Oregon at the end of 2018 was 137, a 10% increase over the previous year. There are likely even more wolves because not all individuals or packs are located during the winter count. Still, the group warned against lifting wolf protections — as the Trump administration is proposing — saying it would be premature and a setback for the species that was almost exterminated in the contiguous United States.

In March, the U.S. Interior Department proposed lifting protections for gray wolves across the Lower 48 states. That would allow states to hold wolf hunting and trapping seasons.

California Fish and Game staff are recommending the Commission send a letter to the federal agencies with feedback on the proposal. While staff make no recommendation as to the Commission's position, the California Commission has previously voted to add the wolf to the California list of endangered species and the CBD hopes to encourage state officials to explicitly oppose delisting the species.

"We're hoping to raise the profile of the issue and rally to encourage the commission to take a stand against the Trump administration's proposal," said Keatinge.

She said Californians support protecting wolves and said supporters are encouraged to come for the rally and stay for the hearing if they are interested in the discussion. The commission has a default policy of three minutes per public speaker but can modify those time allowances to streamline a meeting if necessary.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

The rally will be held at 7:45 a.m. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Civic Auditorium, East Wing, 1855 Main Street.

The agenda also includes an update on California legislation that could impact the Commission's work. A proposal by local Assemblymember Richard Bloom is included in that update regarding his proposal to fight plastic microfibers.

Visit www.biologicaldiversity for more information about the organization or <http://www.fgc.ca.gov/> for more information about the agenda.

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