

May 9, 2006

Dear Senator:

As representatives of conservation organizations that work for the protection and recovery of endangered species and their habitat, and on behalf of the members we represent, we would like to express our strong opposition to the appointment of Idaho governor Dirk Kempthorne as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. In his official positions, decisions, and votes as governor and U.S. senator, Governor Kempthorne has repeatedly favored industry and commercial interests to the great detriment of wildlife and endangered species conservation.

As a U.S. senator from Idaho, Governor Kempthorne had an environmental voting record of 1%, including voting to eliminate the federal Endangered Species Act listing budget; voting to eliminate federal funding for recovery of the endangered wolf; voting to allow developers to override federal environmental laws and local zoning; voting to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration; and voting repeatedly to sell off federal public lands, including lands managed by the Department of Interior.

As governor of Idaho, Governor Kempthorne has opposed the protection and recovery of endangered species in Idaho. He misused the governor's Office of Species Conservation to override the management decisions of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game on conservation issues, and to undermine and indefinitely stall endangered species conservation efforts, squandering federal funding for conservation and recovery in the state, and allowing industry groups to control conservation efforts and filter scientific findings. He has worked to suppress scientific information that shows that hydroelectric dams have negatively impacted salmon populations in Northwest rivers. In 2001, he joined forces with the Boise-Cascade timber company to sue the U.S. Forest Service to block implementation of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule that would protect rare roadless areas in national forests from road-building and development.

The nomination of Governor Kempthorne as Secretary of Interior indicates this Administration's strong intention to continue the disastrous policies implemented under Secretary of Interior Norton. Governor Kempthorne is an extremely poor choice to head the department that oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Please take these concerns into consideration as you consider the nomination of Governor Kempthorne to this important position that oversees the protection and recovery of America's endangered plants and animals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
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